Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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Hearing on impact of increased military presence tonight. **PAGE 3**

Hotel occupancy, room rates go up in January. **PAGE 5**

Federal Register now lists CNMI as part of US

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

The U.S. Federal Register amended its online public comment and submission form to recognize the CNMI as a state or province of the United States following concerns raised by those commenting on the federalization of local immigration and the exclusion of Chinese and Russian tourists from the visa waiver program.

American Samoa has now also been recognized as a U.S. area.

Previously, only Guam, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands were listed as U.S. state or province by the Federal Register on the website.

Philip Mendiola-Long, executive vice president of Bridge Investment Group LLC, raised

See FEDERAL on Page 4

Tudela's employees face wage cuts

EARLY SUMMER BLOOM HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

Patrick delos Reyes, right, an employee of Aqua Resort Club in Achugao, is dwarfed by bougainvilleas in bloom on Saturday. Aqua Resort Club is one of the members of the Hotel Association of the Northern Marianas Islands, which reported an 80.48 percent occupancy among its 13 member hotels for January 2009. The increase exceeds the 77.31 percent occupancy in January 2008. ***See story on Page 5.***

BY MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

Saipan Mayor Juan B. Tudela warned Friday that the severe drop in government revenue this fiscal year will leave him choice but to implement a wage cut on all personnel until the CNMI revenue status recovers.

Tudela

Tudela's office has a total of 64 full-time employees, most of whom he wants to keep, at least until Sept. 30, 2009, the end of the fiscal year.

"For me, it's better to cut their salaries and reduce their working hours…than to see them unemployed because I laid them off," he told *Saipan Tribune*.

From a previous annual appropriation

See TUDELA'S on Page 4

> *There's always the chance for a shortfall. I don't want to stop the delivery of services to our community...and this means that I need to look at the other areas where we can lower our expenses.*

Ex-Labor exec found violating labor law

Salas barred from hiring alien workers

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The Department of Labor has barred a company and its officers, including former congressman and Labor deputy secretary Andrew S. Salas, from hiring alien workers after they failed to pay the wages of former employees.

Under a settlement agreement, Labor Administrative Hearing Officer Jerry Cody said that Da Kine Inc. and its president, Andrew Salas, and corporate officer William Mott are both disqualified from employing alien workers for three years.

Salas

Cody's order, issued last week, said that Salas and Mott may petition to lift this bar once the settlement amounts, includ-

See EX-LABOR on Page 4

Calvo wins case against NMI scholarship board

BY MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

A local student who sued the CNMI Scholarship Board for failing to use the proper criteria in the selection process for an honor scholarship award has won her appeal in the CNMI Supreme Court.

Roselle D. Calvo emerged victorious after the High Court, in a 12-page decision issued Friday, vacated the trial court's decision in the case and remanded it to the scholarship board.

It ordered the scholarship body to reevaluate the entire 2006 honor scholarship appli-

See CALVO on Page 4

POLL RESULTS

Should top CNMI officials agree to a voluntary pay cut as a cost-cutting measure?

Yes-**89**

No-**12**

No opinion-**3**

Sunday, February 22, 2009

146 DAYS without a government budget for FY 2009

INSIDE

War on Deficit

Barack Obama wants to cut the federal deficit in half by the end of his first term.

NATION...Page 14

Hot Weekend

The island community of Tinian offered a delightful weekend of heat, humor, and hospitality at the Tinian Hot Pepper Festival.

LIFE & STYLE...Page 18

Local

Airport's temporary runway project needs $1M

BY MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

The ongoing conversion of the parallel taxiway at the Saipan International Airport is progressing but with some difficulties, according to Commonwealth Ports Authority executive director Efrain S. Camacho.

The project, which is being funded by the Federal Aviation Administration, needs some $1 million more to finish the undertaking.

"The latest is that there could be a project increase of close to $1 million due to a discrepancy in the quantity take off to the quantity to be paved," Camacho reported to the board of directors on Thursday. "The conversion project is ongoing…but with difficulties now."

Camacho said that CPA has already informed the FAA of the increased cost. The federal agency is currently evaluating the proposal.

The conversion of the taxiway is needed to give airplanes a temporary runway until the existing runway is fully rehabilitated.

Camacho disclosed that early this month, CPA had submitted to FAA a list of projects for possible funding under the economic stimulus plan of President Obama, who signed the measure last week.

"One project that is sure to be funded is the Saipan International Airport runway rehabilitation. This is estimated at $15 million to $20 million," Camacho told the board.

He added that the 1.8 megawatts generator project was also included on the list submitted to FAA. "This project is ongoing while the runway rehabilitation is ready for bid," he added.

Besides the two fully repaired main backup generators at the airport, CPA is working on a third generator, which will cost up to $6.8 million, including installation, equipment, and the expansions of other project components.

Other projects on the list are the high speed taxiway on Tinian and the Armed Rescue Firefighter building expansion.

"The plan is to use the economic stimulus funding to fund the big ticket projects that normally cannot be taken cared of by AIPs, or allocation for international ports," Camacho said, adding that the AIPs could be saved this way to address smaller but just as important projects.

Camacho conceded, though, that if CPA is required to match any federal funding, then CPA's participation may be limited to what it can support.

The chief executive officer said the management is currently working on re-establishing communication with the Department of Interior to obtain funding for maintenance purposes, even if a 50 percent matching is required.

"This would be better than what it is now, with either 100 percent [matching] by CPA or nothing at all," Camacho said.

'Funding for public address system OK'd'

Camacho disclosed that CPA has received FAA's go signal for its public address system upgrade, utility enhancement and renovation works at both the international and commuter terminal buildings of the Saipan airport.

"The PAS is an item that has been discussed for at least 15 years now. It will finally be done," Camacho said, adding that other improvements include renovating all the restrooms, addressing the flooding at the immigration and ground floor of the west corridor, additional water motor pump and renovation to the commuter terminal building.

In addition, a grant application has been submitted to FAA for renovation and upgrading of the ARFF burn pit training facility at the airport, he said.

Five-year suspension of CPA *payment for* $6M *loan* OK'd

BY MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

The Commonwealth Ports Authority was granted a five-year relief of its obligation to the Commonwealth Development Authority after the latter agreed to suspend without penalty or interest the remaining loan of the ports authority.

CPA executive director Efrain S. Camacho disclosed this to the board of directors during a special meeting Thursday, citing that the move is in line with the CDA's effort to assist the ports authority, which is in default of its obligation under the seaport bond indenture agreement.

Saipan Tribune learned that from the original $10 million loan made to CPA years ago, the agency had incurred an outstanding balance amounting to $6 million after it failed to pay its obligation on time.

"The CDA has agreed to suspend without penalty or interest for five years the loan to CPA. The balance remaining is about $6 million on an original amount of about $10 million," Camacho told the board, adding that the loan granted by CDA was used in the agency's seaport projects.

The CDA's decision takes the place of debt forgiveness or a deferment of payment of up to three years only, as earlier recommended by CDA.

The remaining loan, *Saipan Tribune* learned, would result in some $68,000 in monthly payments to CPA, if no suspension is made.

The CPA's response to the initial options offered by CDA was delayed as it waited for the completion of the seaport rate study, which was used as a basis for implementing rate increases in all seaport activities.

Due to the more than 60 percent reduction in seaport revenues, the agency was found in default of its indenture agreement. This resulted in the declaration of a state of emergency by the Fitial administration.

This month, the CPA board approved a 90-percent hike on seaport fees and activities in line with the cost-recovery measures eyed for its indenture agreement. CPA had earlier said the increase was intended to prevent any takeover of seaport management by the bank.

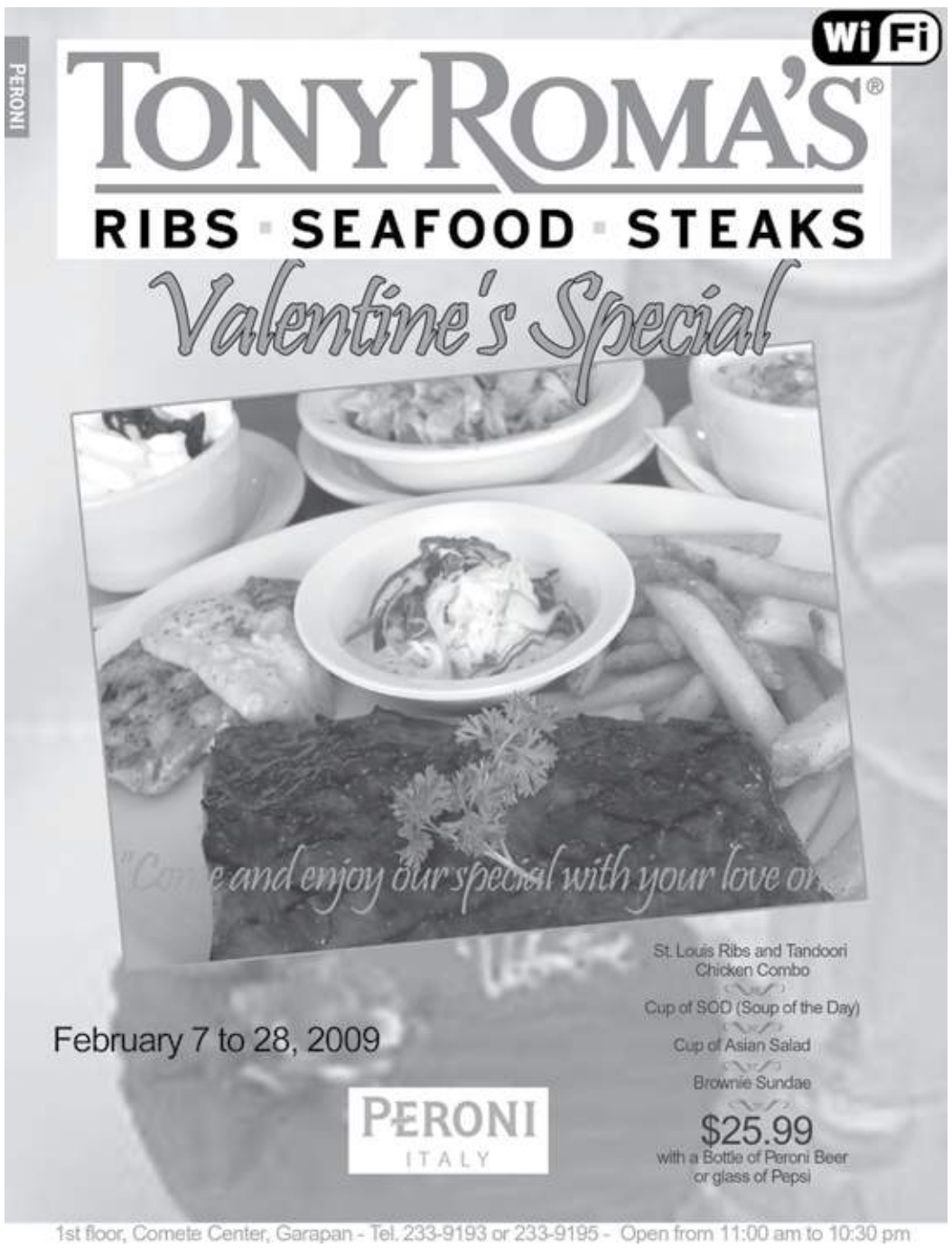
Camacho said the suspension of payments will help CPA comply with all the indenture issues.

"It would be a big help to the agency in its effort to fully comply with the bond requirements," he told *Saipan Tribune*, adding that CPA is in "the right direction" to compliance.

Because of the many progress noted in the seaport operations, Camacho said the seaport is projected to meet its debt service coverage ratio of 1.25 due to the tariff rates increase effective this month.

"But the management is aware of the volatility of the revenue tons and the continuing downward trend. For this reason, it will be necessary to lower expenses where practicable and ensure realized revenues are in compliance with the forecasted estimates," Camacho said during the board meeting.

He said new rates implemented at the seaport will be evaluated and assessed after three months. From its results, CPA will determine if there's a need to continue or adjust the rates of the stakeholders.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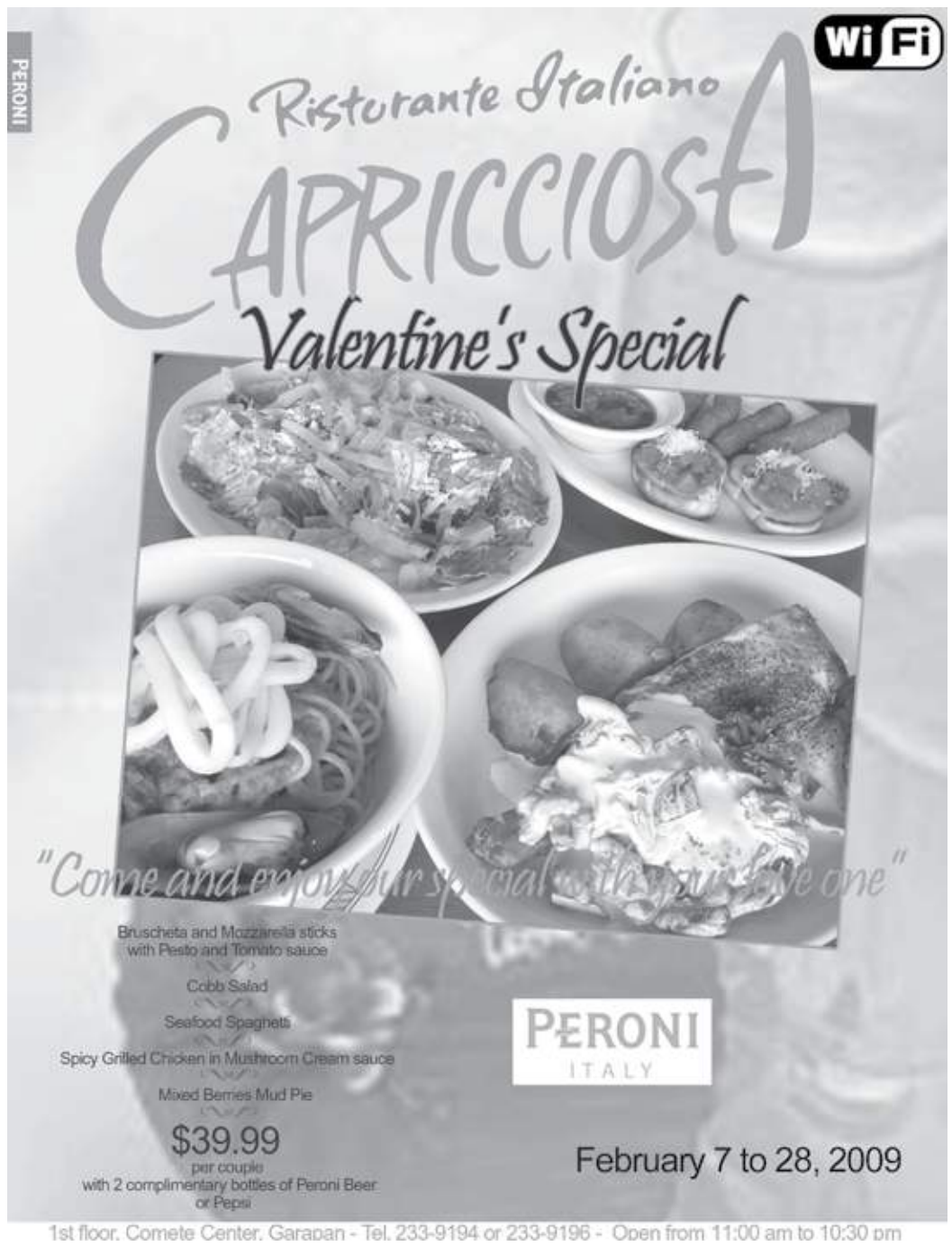
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Hearing on impact of increased military presence held tonight

By KRISTI EATON
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REPORTER

Officials from the U.S. Navy will be holding a public hearing tonight at the Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe to discuss the Mariana Islands Range Complex Environmental Impact Statement.

The 45-day comment period on the statement began on Jan. 30 and ends on March 16, 2009.

The training and testing range complex includes land, air and sea areas on and around Guam, Rota, Tinian, Saipan and Farrallon de Medinilla.

Before any increase in military activity or presence in the Marianas, the military must determine what impact those activities will have on the environment, which comprises not just water resources, air quality, marine mammals, sea turtles, fish and essential fish habitat, seabirds and shorebirds and plants, but also the economic well-being, cultural resources and the health and safety of people living in the CNMI and Guam.

The study identifies aspects that could act as "stressors" to the environment.

This early, some CNMI residents have expressed concern about the possible entry of more brown tree snakes from Guam, effects on sea turtles, humpback whales and other species, and water contamination, among other things.

However, the draft environmental impact statement/overseas environmental impact statement says "no significant impacts are identified for any resource area in any geographic location within the MIRC study area that cannot be mitigated, with the exception of exposure of marine mammals to underwater sound."

The draft EIS/OEIS says that "existing hazardous materials and waste management systems are sufficient for handling of wastes generated," and that there's "no significant harm to water quality" and "air quality."

It also says the proposed action has no significant harm to fish populations or habitat, seabirds and shorebirds, among other things.

The MIRC EIS/OEIS document is different from the Guam and CNMI Marine Relocation EIS/OEIS for the relocation of Marine forces from Okinawa to Guam, which has been estimated to cost as much as $15 billion. The relocation EIS/OEIS is still being worked on.

A public hearing will be held on Tinian tomorrow in the cafeteria of Tinian Elementary School.

On Rota, the public hearing will be on Thursday in the Sinapalo Elementary School cafeteria.

A copy of the draft MIRC IEIS/OEIS can be accessed online at http://www.marianasrangecomplexeis.com/otherresources.aspx.

ON THE NET
Draft MIRC IEIS/OEIS: http://www.marianasrangecomplexeis.com/otherresources.aspx.

Of $22M CIP since '06, PSS spends $18M

By KRISTI EATON
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REPORTER

Of the $22 million the Public School System has received in Capital Improvement Project funding since 2006, $18 million has been spent, according to documents the school system provided to the Legislature.

A large portion of unused funding comes from federal CIP grants and money appropriated under law to Tinian High School to fix their transformer. According to the documents, the $1.2 million federal CIP funding should be expended by Aug. 30, 2009. PSS is expecting to receive the environmental permits this month in order to proceed with the projects. The school system is also waiting on environmental approval to move forward with the $1.2 million transformer project, according to the documents.

PSS provided the CIP documents to the Legislature after House Speaker Arnold Palacios requested them.

Last year, Gov. Benigno R. Fitial reprogrammed $1.2 million in CIP money for immediate repairs in 20 public school facilities. From the figure, $66,000 was appropriated to GTC for termite control and electrical upgrades. Since the cancellation of the project from the community development block grants, PSS was asked to re-appropriate $1.2 million to accommodate the GTC renovation.

Of the 77 CIP projects PSS has undertaken since 2006, 18 still have a balance of funds, totaling $4.64 million.

Twelve projects are system-wide projects, with six of them complete. Of the 16 projects on Rota, six are complete. On Tinian, three of the six projects have been finished. Twenty-six of the 42 projects on Saipan have been completed.

USCG rescues missing swimmer

GUAM—Coast Guard Sector Guam received a report of a missing swimmer in Agana Bay Saturday night at 8:45pm.

Coast Guard Sector Guam then requested Guam Fire and Rescue to dispatch its rescue boat to search the area.

Additionally, Sector Guam requested Navy Helicopter Combat Squadron 25 launch one of its helicopters from Anderson Air Force Base.

As a result of these efforts, a 22-year-old male was found and successfully recovered by the Navy helicopter around 10pm last night.

The U.S. Coast Guard reminds the public to take proper precautions when swimming and not to swim alone. Please report any cases of maritime distress to the Coast Guard Command Center in Guam at (671) 564-USCG. ***(USCG)***

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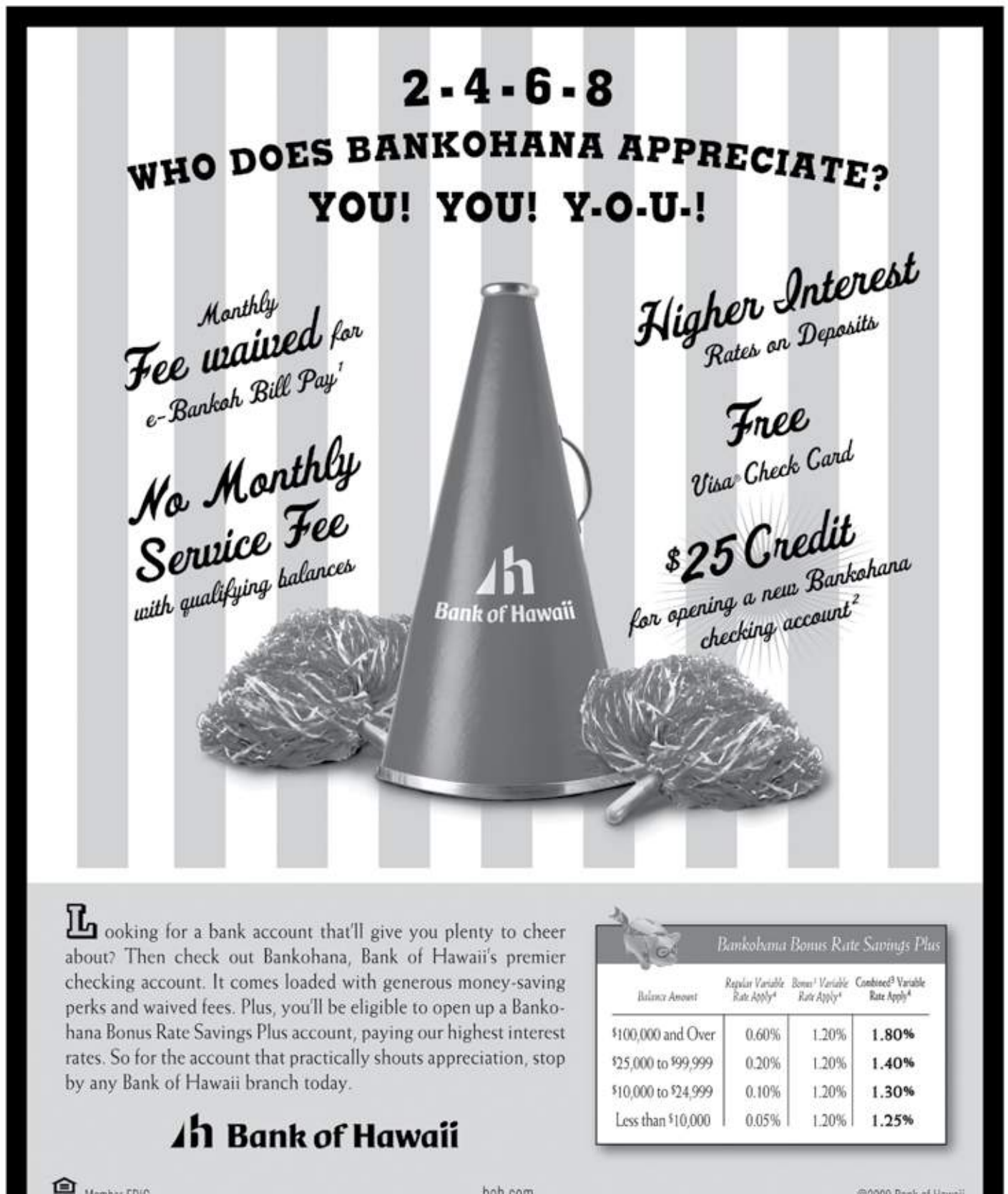
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On October 3, 2008, FDIC deposit insurance temporarily increased from $100,000 to $250,000 per depositor through December 31, 2009. FDIC

CALVO

From Page 1

cations process and award the scholarships based on the criteria set by law in selecting recipients.

Calvo, who failed to be selected for the honor scholarship award despite complying with all necessary requirements, had appealed the trial court's decision in 2007 that affirmed the NMI scholarship advisory board's methods for selecting honor scholarship recipients.

Calvo graduated as her class salutatorian at Marianas Baptist Academy in May 2006. She was one of the 29 Saipan high school students who applied for an honor scholarship. After complying with all the requirements of the applications, she was not chosen for the award.

She appealed her case but the board maintained its decision, citing that Calvo ranked 11th only among the Saipan applicants as grounds for rejecting her application.

In her petition, Calvo argued that the scholarship board disregarded the criteria set forth in selecting scholarship recipients, which include grade point average, SAT or ACT score, extracurricular activities, difficulty of high school coursework, and letters of recommendation.

The Supreme Court, in its decision, indicated that the scholarship board shall promptly promulgate rules and regulations consistent with the statutory language of the Constitution, which requires the board to weigh the five criteria.

The court ordered the scholarship board to reevaluate the entire set of applications for the 2006 honor scholarships and award the scholarships based on the statutory-mandated criteria.

Calvo was elated with the decision of the High Court.

"I am very pleased by the decision of the Supreme Court in my case against the Scholarship Office and board. The decision issued is a showcase of the justice provided by our legal system, especially since it is one coming from the highest judicial officials," she said, adding that from the beginning, the case was based on the pursuit of justice.

"This victory is a victory not just for me, but also for our community. Let this be a message to the Scholarship Board and other boards that they have to follow the law, not create their own laws. Their decision to create their own rules and regulations led to this catastrophe that will require them to backtrack three years and recalculate the awards based upon the letter of the law," Calvo said.

She thanked her lawyer, Robert Torres, who she said took on the case purely "because he saw the injustice" committed by the board.

"To the youth, never give up. To the community, don't be scared of the government. Most importantly, always fight for what is right, even if that fight takes years to end," Calvo added.

Each year the scholarship board awards 12 honor scholarships to CNMI students graduating from high school—eight from Saipan, and two each from Tinian and Rota.

Recipients may receive up to $15,000 annually for up to five years so long as the scholarship funds are used to pay for education-related expenses.

BIRTHDAY GIRL

Happy birthday greetings go out to J'den A. Reyes, who is celebrating her birthday today, Feb. 23. We love you! From mom, dad, and Yoshi Boy.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

EX-LABOR

From Page 1

ing liquidated damages, are fully paid to complainants Sammy R. Fabito and Alfredo M. Lumabi.

Andrew Salas was also a Commerce secretary during the Babauta administration.

Cody said that Andrew Salas' brother, Tom Salas, also provided false and misleading information to Labor Director Barry Hirshbein and to the hearing officer during the course of the Labor's order to show cause hearing,

He said that Tom Salas' statements about being a corporate officer with authority to allow payments by Da Kine Inc., which were made during the Jan. 20, 2009 hearing, "were patently false."

Cody said Tom Salas is not a party to the case, so he will not issue an order sanctioning him for his conduct in this instance.

"However, Mr. [Tom] Salas is warned that any future instances of providing false or misleading information to the department may result in the filing of an agency case against him for such conduct," the hearing officer said.

Cody revoked all valid work permits issued to Da Kine's other alien workers—Joel O. Tagalicud, Nita D. Batuigas, Analyn S. Clapis, Joel M. Salvosa, Ritchel J. Jocson, Jiorella T. Caburnay, and James R. Garduce.

Cody allowed the seven to seek new employers.

Cody said that if Ka Dine Inc. repays the remaining amounts owed under the settlement ($1,633.56 to Lumabi and $3,309.60 to Fabito) in full on or before March 15, 2009, the cases shall be closed with no liquidated damages award and no sanctions against any corporate officers.

Alternatively, the hearing officer said, if Ka Dine Inc. chooses to return to the installment schedule of payments, the company's monthly settlement payments to Lumabi and Fabito shall be reduced from $250 to $125 per month, beginning March 15, 2009.

If Ka Dine chooses to return to the installment schedule, Cody said, the company is ordered to pay liquidated damages in the amount of $1,000 each to Lumabi and Fabito.

The order to show cause hearing in the case was held four times in January in response to the Labor Director's request to allow the employer the opportunity to explain why all permits for alien workers held by Da Kine should not be revoked.

According to Labor records, the labor cases were initially filed by Lumabi and Fabito, former employees of Ka Dine Inc., which owned the Hawaii Bar and Grill, for unpaid wages.

In August 2008, both cases were settled during mediation, with Ka Dine agreeing to pay thousands of dollars in unpaid wages to the complainants.

Under the settlement agreements, Da Kine promised to pay $3,859.60 to Fabito and $2,183.56 to Lumabi. The parties agreed that the settlements would be paid in monthly installments of $250 each, commencing on Sept. 15, 2008, and continuing on the 15th of each month.

Ka Dine paid monthly installments in September and October 2008, but then made no payments in November and December 2008, and in January 2009.

Ka Dine paid $50 to each complainant during the January 2009 hearing.

At the first hearing last Jan. 20, Tom Salas testified that he was Da Kine's corporate secretary and that he had the authority to make agreements on behalf of the corporation.

Tom Salas agreed that Ka Dine would pay the missing payments ($750 each) to each worker, plus $750 in liquidated damages no later than Jan. 23, 2009.

At the next hearing on Jan. 23, Da Kine's president, Andrew Salas, appeared and renounced promises made by his brother, Tom.

Andrew Salas stated that his brother was not a corporate officer and that he was not authorized to make any promises to pay the settlements.

With respect to the delinquent payments, Andrew Salas admitted that he had known Da Kine was obligated to make monthly settlement payments in 2008. He claimed that he needed all available funds to keep Hawaii Bar & Grill in operation. Thus, Ka Dine did not pay the amounts and, instead, sought to modify the settlement agreement.

At the Jan. 26 hearing, Andrew Salas announced that Da Kine's management had decided to permanently close the Hawaii Bar & Grill and that the business had, in fact, closed two days earlier—on Jan. 24.

Labor Director Hirshbein indicated that he had no specific objections to the proposal, but that he believes that Ka Dine and its officers should be barred from employing alien workers in the future.

In his administrative order, Cody said even if the failure to pay is not considered bad faith conduct, it still amounts to a breach of the settlement agreements, thus entitling the Labor Director to raise the issues of sanctions against Da Kine and for such conduct.

In imposing sanction against Da Kine and its officers, Cody cited that Da Kine continued to hire additional alien workers after it began to experience financial hardships in September 2008.

Cody said Andrew Salas testified that he employed one foreign national worker as a cook on a part-time basis, despite the fact that Da Kine had never submitted a permit application to employ her.

TUDELA'S

From Page 1

of $2.5 million for the Saipan municipality, the amount plummeted this year, resulting in only $1.2 million for personnel costs. The amount reflects the across-the-board 5 percent cut in the allotments of all government instrumentalities.

"In a limited budget for personnel and operation, there's always the chance for a shortfall. I don't want to stop the delivery of services to our community…and this means that I need to look at the other areas where we can lower our expenses. One of them is personnel cost," he said.

Tudela, who just arrived from a conference of mayors abroad, said that Saipan is not alone in the budget crisis, with other regions and states facing the same dire situation.

However, he said, "priority" sets the difference.

Under the approved budget of the Legislature, the austerity and non-paid holiday proposals of the Fitial administration were excluded.

In conceding that these measures will be introduced as a stand-alone legislation, Tudela said he might not wait for the Legislature's formal action if the need arises for its implementation.

The budget legislation, which the Legislature is thinking of overriding after being twice vetoed by Gov. Benigno Fitial, contains a provision giving expenditure authorities and business units the authority to enforce internal austerity measures either in supplies, operation, or personnel.

"I have 64 employees…and only one of them is receiving $45,000 annually. The rest are receiving wages ranging from $12,000 to $18,000. I think it would be fair enough if adjustment will be implemented on all of them," he said.

Tudela is mulling a 72-hour biweekly schedule or up to 64-hour service, if needed, just to keep everybody's job.

Last fiscal year, a number of the municipality's employees were issued termination notices and non-renewal of contracts but were later reconsidered until the end of the fiscal year.

"All personnel are vital in our operation. Their services are critical in the timely delivery of services to the people," he said.

Tudela is serving his last term in office as Saipan mayor.

"In the remaining 10 months of my administration, I want to continue my mission for 'the people,'" the mayor said.

FEDERAL

From Page 1

the issue with the U.S. Customs Border Protection, one of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's largest and most complex components.

DHS CBP proposes to establish federal ports of entry in the CNMI and implement the Guam-CNMI Visa Waiver Program.

"I find it appalling that for comments to be posted on this site, the very government that is instituting dramatic regulatory changes to our U.S. territory doesn't even recognize our commonwealth as a part of the United States of America," Mendiola-Long said.

Later, Janna M. Evans, regional lead for community outreach of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Western Region, told Mendiola-Long that she had raised his concern with the Federal Register.

Last week, the Federal Register listed the CNMI and American Samoa under the United States.

The office of Delegate Gregorio "Kilili" C. Sablan brought this to the attention of the CNMI over the weekend.

By June 1, the U.S. federal government will take over CNMI immigration due to a law signed by former President Bush in May 2008. The CNMI is the remaining U.S. territory that controls its own immigration.

Evans added that as the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services expands its public outreach and education about federalization, it will do its best to visit Tinian and Rota on their next trip just like it did when it recently visited Saipan.

15 comments

Only 15 comments from CNMI private citizens, government officials and businesses have been posted on the Federal Register website as of Friday, less than a month before the March 17 deadline for public comments.

All of the comments want a 180-delay in federalization and/or allow Chinese and Russian tourists to enter the CNMI without a U.S. visa by June 1.

Tasi Tours & Transportation Inc. is the latest CNMI entity to oppose the adoption of the interim rule as a final rule.

"We ask that you reconsider the implementation of this rule and permit the CNMI to have a chance to develop tourism among the 1.5 billion people of China and Russia, the two newest and largest emerging markets in the Asia region," Kazusuke Fukuju, president of Tasi Tours & Transportation Inc. and general manager of Pacific Micronesia Tours Inc., told DHS in his comment.

Fukuju said the company proposes to DHS to include Russia and China on the list of eligible countries under the Guam-CNMI Visa Waiver Program as of June 1 and that the DHS secretary determine whether to suspend these countries after 12 months.

He said "many" Chinese and Russian visitors "will" simply choose to forgo travel to the CNMI because of the additional burden associated with the U.S. visa requirements.

"We have worked for years to promote the CNMI as a destination and we are beginning to see progress. Once it is announced that a visa is required for travel, the harm will be done…A subsequent change in policy—as proposed for when 'additional layered security measures' are in place—will be too late. The CNMI will have missed the boat. The stream of tourists will already have been diverted to other resort destinations," said Fukuju.

Attached to Fukuju's six-page comment are the signatures of 67 individuals "opposed to the full implementation" of the interim final rule "for its devastating impact on the economy and people of the CNMI."

Tasi Tours & Transportation Inc., along with its sister company PMT Tours, is the largest tour operator in the CNMI. It has a substantial investment in the CNMI where it has been doing business for nearly 33 years. Both companies are affiliated with the Japan Travel Bureau, the world's largest tour company.

The following have so far posted comments on the federalization regulations online: Kazusuke Fukuju of Tasi Tours & Transportation Inc. and Pacific Micronesia Tours Inc.; an anonymous individual; Hyun Myung of Neo Gold Wings Paradise; businessman and photographer Del Benson; Marianas Visitors Authority managing director Perry Tenorio; MVA board of directors; Patrick San Nicolas; Jack F. McClure of Pacific Subsea Saipan Inc.; the Tinian and Aguingan Municipal Council; S.G. Stephanson; Oleg Valentine Tchernychenko of Belka Tours; Juanita M. Mendiola; Joseph T. Guerrero; Laurie Peterka of Practical Solutions; and Bridge Investment Group's Mendiola-Long.

Hotel occupancy, room rates go up in Jan.

The Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands has reported an 80.48 percent occupancy among its 13 member hotels for January 2009.

The increase exceeds the 77.31 percent occupancy in January 2008 with an additional 521 rooms occupied for a total of 68,609. Room rates also rose slightly from $109.70 last year to $116.42 in January 2009.

"The slight increase in January 2009 was partially driven by holiday travel associated with the Chinese New Year, as well as the two Russian charter flights we received," said HANMI vice chair Nick Nishikawa. "These two markets continue to help fill the gaps caused by fewer tourists from other markets."

In January 2008, HANMI had 88,071 room nights available for sale; the number of January 2009 room nights for sale was 85,250. This year's figures do not include the Plumeria Resort, which has closed. The month's activities generated $400,000 in gross receipt tax and $800,000 in hotel occupancy tax.

In related news, HANMI elected new officers of the board in January 2009. Century Hotel GM Lynn Knight was re-elected chairwoman, Hyatt Regency Saipan GM Nick Nishikawa was elected vice-chair, Fiesta Resort & Spa GM B.K. Park was elected secretary, and Mike Johnson of allied member Deloitte Touche was elected treasurer. Aqua Resort GM Hiro Sugie and Saipan World Resort GM Hong Chul Shin also serve on the board. Knight is currently on extended leave, having been recently appointed as Gov. Benigno R. Fitial's representative in Washington on federalization and economic development.

The Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands was established in 1985 as a professional forum for the hospitality industry of the CNMI. ***(HANMI)***

UMDA asks CNMI court to set trial on Aug. 3

Pursuant to a court request on Feb. 17, attorneys for United Micronesia Development Association have filed a proposed scheduling order with Presiding Judge Robert C. Naraja of the CNMI Superior Court in UMDA's ongoing multi-million dollar lawsuit against Robert Pfaff, John Larson, and their shell companies and offshore trusts.

Friday's proposed order submitted by UMDA lays out a detailed schedule of key dates, leading up to a proposed first day of trial on Aug. 3, 2009. This is the second time UMDA has produced a proposed order at the court's request, while defendants have thus far failed to provide any detailed schedule, much less a proposed trial date.

"After two years of litigation, we believe that it's time for UMDA shareholders to have their day in court and finally learn what happened to our company during the 10 years that defendants were enriching themselves at shareholders' expense. I hear every day from shareholder representatives like Clarence Tenorio, one of the directors of Joeten Enterprises on Saipan, asking when the case will go to trial," said UMDA chair Jose Lifoifoi. "I know that I'm speaking for all 1,200 Micronesian shareholders in UMDA, including the governments of the CNMI, Palau and the Federal States of Micronesia, when I express the hope that the trial will go forward in August as we have proposed to the court."

Lifoifoi continued, "At this late date defendants are renewing their efforts to hide key documents behind a proposed protective order, including those that might reveal the existence of their offshore bank accounts. It's not surprising that convicted tax cheats like Mr. Pfaff and Mr. Larson would want to conceal both their past activities and their hidden assets from both UMDA and the federal tax authorities. But I strongly believe that it's in the public interest that these documents are made public and that court hearings should be open to our shareholders in the months to come."

UMDA was founded in 1966 in Saipan. Its shareholders include the government or governmental entities of the CNMI, Palau, Federated States of Micronesia, and thousands of individual Micronesians and their families. ***(UMDA)***

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Mariana Islands Range Complex Draft EIS/OEIS Available for Public Comment Jan. 30, 2009 – March 16, 2009

On behalf of the U.S. Defense Representative Guam, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, and Republic of Palau, the U.S. Navy has prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement (EIS/OEIS) for the Mariana Islands Range Complex. The Draft EIS/OEIS is available for public comment through March 16, 2009.

Where to get the EIS/OEIS: Visit www.MarianasRangeComplexEIS.com to download the document or to find a library that has a copy.

The U.S. Defense Representative Wants Your Input!

The U.S. Defense Representative is hosting open house sessions and public hearings to receive oral or written comments on the Draft EIS/OEIS.

Where to submit comments:

Submit comments via the online form at www.MarianasRangeComplexEIS.com or send written comments via postal mail or e-mail to:

Mariana Islands Range Complex EIS
258 Makalapa Drive, Suite 100
Attn: EV2
Pearl Harbor, HI 96860-3134
E-mail: marianas.tap.eis@navy.mil

All comments must be postmarked by March 16, 2009.

Proposed Action

The U.S. Defense Representative proposes to support and conduct current, emerging and future training and research, development, test and evaluation training activities in the Mariana Islands Study Area. Three alternatives are analyzed in the Draft EIS/OEIS. Under the No Action Alternative, military activities would continue at current levels. Alternatives 1 and 2 propose increases in military activity and the number and types of training events, and enhancements to range capabilities. Alternative 2 also proposes new activities related to additional Major Exercises.

Open House Sessions & Public Hearings
Open House: 5 - 9 p.m.
Public Hearing: 7 - 9 p.m.

Guam:
February 19, 2009
Jesus & Eugenia Leon Guerrero School of Business and Public Administration Building
The Anthony Leon Guerrero Multi-Purpose Room 129
University of Guam
Mangilao, Guam 96923

Guam:
February 20, 2009
Southern High School Cafeteria
#1 Jose Perez Leon Guerrero Drive
Santa Rita, Guam 96915

Saipan:
February 23, 2009
Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe

Tinian:
February 24, 2009
Tinian Elementary School Cafeteria
San Jose Village
Tinian, MP 96952

Rota:
February 26, 2009
Sinapolo Elementary School Cafeteria
Sinapolo I

For more information visit **www.MarianasRangeComplexEIS.com**

Villagomez, Cabinet talk stimulus

By KRISTI EATON
kristi_eaton@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Acting governor Timothy Villagomez met with Cabinet members and department and agency heads Friday to discuss the federal stimulus grant applications.

During the meeting, which was also attended by grant writers and representatives from the Northern Marianas College and the Public School System, Villagomez and Commerce Secretary Michael Ada explained the grant application procedures and requirements, said Charles Reyes, press secretary for the Governor's Office.

Gov. Benigno Fitial has appointed Ada to coordinate the effort among the various departments within the executive branch.

Of the $787 billion package signed into law by President Obama Tuesday last week, the CNMI could receive at least $96 million, but the Commonwealth must compete with other states and territories for the money through grant applications.

CNMI delegate Gregorio "Kilili" Sablan had called on the administration to work quickly or the Northern Marianas could lose their chance at receiving any grant money. During a meeting with legislators on Thursday, Sablan said he believes CNMI officials are moving too slowly on this matter. Other states, he said, have been preparing for the stimulus package since it was in the planning stages.

The administration is just getting started but this is a unique situation, Reyes said.

"You have to remember this is unprecedented legislation," he said, adding that an opportunity like this has not presented itself during this administration.

"I don't recall anything like this occurring before. We're doing our best to meet the challenge. We're treated like a state. We're eligible to compete for these grants but it's a competitive process."

Other states have more resources, he added. Some states have hired people specifically tasked with working on the applications in order to get the most money possible. Ada has said that this is not possible for the CNMI. Instead, the CNMI must leverage its resources.

Federal agencies will distribute the money to states and territories that have shovel-ready projects. Law enforcement and health were two possible areas discussed Friday that might have shovel-ready projects, Reyes said.

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS

DCCA CHILD CARE PROGRAM OPENS FOR NEW APPLICANTS
(CNMI Wide)

To: All parents and/or Legal Guardians

The Department of Community and Cultural Affairs will be accepting new applications for Child Care and Development Fund (Child Care Program) for the islands of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. Applications for the island of Saipan may be picked up on Tuesday, March 3 and Wednesday, March 4 at the MultiPurpose Hall, Susupe from 8:30a.m. to 3:30p.m. Applications for the island of Tinian and Rota, please go to your respective DCCA offices.

*Applications are limited and are released on a **FIRST COME, FIRST SERVE** basis. When the applications are out, the program will immediately close its issuance of applications. For this opening, only 100 applications will be released.*

*Applications that were released in the previous openings are no longer valid and **WILL NOT** be accepted.*

*Completed applications along with the required documents should be turned in on or before Friday, **March 13, 2009**.*

Child Care Program Office hours (Saipan)
Mondays to Thursdays 7:30a.m. to 4:30p.m.
Fridays 7:30a.m. to 1:00p.m.
Fridays 1:00p.m. to 4:30p.m. CLOSED

Requirements:
Applicant of Household
1. Check stubs for the most recent two pay periods for each parent or guardian
2. A copy of Identification Card for each parent or guardian (Passport, CNMI driver's license, Mayor's ID Card or entry permit)
3. A copy of your most recent 1040 Tax (each parent or guardian)
4. Residency: The applicant or guardian must be living in the CNMI
   Provide one of the following documents
   a. House Rental/ Mortgage
   b. Utility Receipt
   c. Telephone Receipt
   d. Entry Permit
5. Employment verification
6. Child support statement/stub
7. Training/Education Verification and class schedules
8. If single parent/guardian in a household provide notarized affidavit

Child/Children Household member:
1. A copy of Birth Certificate for each child (Child must be a US citizen or a qualified alien, as defined in Personal Responsibility Work Opportunity Act (PRWORA)
2. A copy of US Passport
3. A copy of Social Security Card

Incomplete applications will not be accepted

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Expenses surpass revenue for CUC water, sewage

By KRISTI EATON
kristi_eaton@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

With rates for the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. sewer and water remaining unchanged for the last 22 and 14 years, respectively, expenses have exceeded revenue by several million dollars during the last two years.

In 2008, expenses for water and sewer were $10 million while only $6 million came in, according to a report presented to the Legislature on Friday. In 2007, revenue was slightly more than $8 million while expenses reached nearly $14 million.

From 2004 to 2006, revenue and expenses remained fairly even between $10 and $12 million.

Currently, water rates are set with a base rate and higher unit costs as more water is used. This method is used to encourage conservation, according to CUC. Current sewer rates assume customers produce 90 percent of the water purchased. There is also a base rate and a graduated unit cost as more sewage is produced.

Georgetown Consulting Group is currently reviewing data and will recommend new rates that balance economic conditions and CUC's needs, the utility agency said.

In December, the Public Utilities Commission, which approves rates, used Georgetown's recommendations to set new power rates. Another proposed action is to separate revenue and expending activities between water, sewer and electric.

Yahoo! Japan and Asahi News Star to feature Saipan, Tinian

The Northern Mariana Islands of Saipan and Tinian will be featured as a vacation destination over the next few months on Yahoo! Japan and Asahi News Star, following a recent familiarization tour from Japan.

A cable and satellite news channel, Asahi News Star reaches 4.5 million households. As part of its 20th anniversary, the channel will produce 15-minute and 5-minute programs for March and April to introduce Saipan and Tinian as a destination for the senior market. The five-minute programs will also air on Yahoo! Japan.

A producer, director, assistant director, and cameraman from Asahi News Start arrived on Saipan last week and departed Wednesday morning, Feb. 18.

"Five full days of shooting is slightly longer than our average familiarization tour, and we've been very pleased to assist Asahi News Star in seeing as much of our islands as possible during their stay," said Marianas Visitors Authority managing director Perry Tenorio. "We're especially pleased that they requested to join the festivities at last weekend's Tinian Hot Pepper Festival, as the Tinian community has its own special appeal to visitors."

The group arrived in Saipan on Friday, Feb. 13. After checking in at the Palms Resort Saipan, they boarded a quick ferry to Managaha Island, where they spent several hours gathering footage of the island's world-renowned snorkeling, tradewind-powered parasailing, and the new beach spa. Later in the day, the tour group took in the scenic and historic sites of northern Saipan, including Banzai Cliff, Suicide Cliff, Last Command Post, Bird Island Lookout, Grotto, and the Marpi pathway.

The familiarization tour joined the activities of the annual Tinian Hot Pepper Festival over the weekend. The tour traveled by jet-powered ferry to Tinian and checked into the world-class Tinian Dynasty Hotel and Casino. In addition to participating in the festival revelries at Tachogna Beach, the tour group also took in the giant, carved limestone monoliths at the House of Taga, the island's popular and picturesque blowhole and quaint San Jose village.

The many culinary pleasures of Saipan and Tinian were featured, including local produce and dishes sold by farmers at the weekly Sabalu Market, familiar Japanese favorites at grocery store and restaurant Ebisuya, a barbecue lunch hot off the grill, island favorites seasoned with Tinian donni sali (indigenous Chamorro hot pepper), a sunset dinner cruise aboard the sailboat Stars and Stripes, and an elegant spread put out by Revolving Restaurant 360.

The shooting schedule also featured several sports and recreational activities available year-round in the CNMI, including golf at Laolao Bay Golf Resort and walking along the scenic Saipan Beach pathway. The crew also enjoyed a day of activities with Marianas Trekking, taking a hiking tour to Forbidden Island and snorkeling in the azure waters of Saipan.

When asked how they liked Saipan, show producer Miho Harada said, "It's wonderful here, I don't want to leave." Both she and famed Japanese movie director Eiji Uchida vowed to return to the Marianas on vacation.

The tour was supported by MVA, providing assistance with permitting, ground transportation, and logistics.

"We continue to support fam tours as a sound investment of our tourism budget," said Tenorio. "With a little bit of support from MVA and our members, the NMI reaps a tremendous return in promotions."

The estimated exposure value of the Asahi News Star programs featuring Saipan and Tinian is $132,000. ***(MVA)***

Renowned Japanese movie director Eiji Uchida, with hat, calls the shots while filming recently at American Memorial Park on Saipan for Asahi News Star. The cable and satellite channel will feature the islands of Saipan and Tinian in their upcoming 20th anniversary special program, reaching 4.5 million households in Japan.

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Judge wants class suit to move forward

Superior Court Associate Judge David Wiseman wants the class action filed by 127 alien workers against the Department of Labor and some of its official to "move forward."

In an order, Wiseman said that Labor's concern that the complaint is not proper is not before his court.

The judge ordered that the case move forward on the plaintiffs' petition for judicial review.

Wiseman set procedural guidelines for the parties to follow. The judge ordered the plaintiffs to secure, among other things, a transcript if they deem one necessary. He directed Labor, through its attorney, to cooperate with plaintiffs in securing the tapes for producing the transcript.

Wiseman gave Labor 15 days to certify the record and serve it on plaintiffs' counsel, Robert Myers.

Wiseman also ordered plaintiffs to file a statement of disputed and undisputed facts within 15 days.

He directed Labor to file any opposition to any disputed or undisputed facts within 10 days after the plaintiffs file the statements.

Alien workers who sued their former employers for wage and overtime violations and had been awarded damages filed the class action.

Myers asked the court to compel Labor and its officials to enforce the surety's obligations under the statutory labor bonds.

Labor special counsel Deanne Siemer has denied that the Commonwealth Employment Act of 2007 requires Labor to collect awards made in the administrative orders issued in Labor cases.

Siemer also argued that the Superior Court has no jurisdiction over the class action. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

CAMPUS BULLETIN

Veterans' briefing and stress management briefing

This is to let all combat veterans, their dependents and all concerned know that on Feb. 26-27, 2009, Catherine Illarmo, the Department of Veterans Affairs team leader/LCSW from the Guam Vet Center will be on Saipan to give individuals counseling to combat veterans and a stress management briefing to all interested. Anyone wishing to see Illarmo may call her at 1-671-472-7161 or Ruth Coleman at the Veterans Affairs Office at 664-2650 to make an appointment. She will also take walk-ins.

■ Feb. 26, 2009, 9am-4pm, Military/ Veterans Office, Bldg 1364, Capital Hill

■ Feb. 27, 2009 9am-12pm, same place

■ Feb. 26, 2009, 6pm, Army Reserve Center

For more information, call Ruth Coleman at the Office of Military/ Veterans Affairs at 664-2650. ***(PR)***

Puengin Inetnon seeks vendors, entertainers

Entertainers and produce vendors are needed for Puengin Inetnon, Kagman's Friday Night Markets. Puengin Inetnon is held every government payday at the Kagman Community Center parking lot from 4:30pm to 10pm. Interested vendors and entertainers may call the Kagman Post Office at 256-POST. ***(PR)***

UPAA CNMI meeting on Feb. 28

The University of the Philippines Alumni Association-CNMI Chapter will have a meeting on Saturday, Feb. 28, 5:30pm at the Filipino Workers Resource Center, (POLO/OWWA), 1st floor, Marianas Business Plaza (formerly Nauru Bldg.) in Susupe, Saipan . All UPAA officers/ members and UP alumni are invited to attend. ***(PR)***

Taotao Tano officers' meeting set

This is to inform all officers of Taotao Tano CNMI Association Inc. that there will be an important meeting this Friday, Feb. 27, at 6:30pm. The agenda include critical public affairs and upcoming events. Call 256-8652 (TOKA) or 788-6764 for details on location. You can also e-mail taotaotanopres@gmail.com for information. ***(PR)***

WISH COMES TRUE

U.S. Coast Guard Chief Petty Officer Cory Gunkel, left, and Chief Petty Officer Bruce Helterbridle pin anchors on Hannah Bontrager, an 11-year-old leukemia survivor from Cortland, Ohio, officially promoting her to a Coast Guard Chief Petty Officer for the day, Thursday, Feb. 19, 2009. Hannah is in Hawaii courtesy of the Make-A-Wish Foundation of America and had asked to ride aboard a Coast Guard vessel. She spent the day with Station Honolulu personnel, sat at the helm of the 47-foot rescue boat as the crew took her for a ride around the island of Oahu.

U.S. COAST GUARD/PETTY OFFICER 3RD CLASS MICHAEL DE NYSE

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IT&E would like to remind its customers that payments not received by close of business on February 24th, will result in temporary suspension of all telephone services after 6:00 p.m. on that day. To prevent temporary suspension, customers must pay their bills on or before February 24th.

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BRUCE L. MAILMAN is a member of the American Immigration Lawyers Association and has provided immigration services in the CNMI since 1989

MAYA B. KARA is a former CNMI Acting Attorney General, Chief Legislative Counsel, Governor's and Lt. Governor's Legal Counsel and DOL Hearing Officer

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

February 23, 1999

NMC board bypassed

The House committee on Health, Education and Welfare pounded on the controversial pay increase for few employees of the Northern Marianas College during the resumption of its oversight hearing yesterday, uncovering arbitrary decisions made without approval of the Board of Regents as well as actions contrary to existing laws Despite the austerity measures implemented by the government, the state college has continued to overshoot its budget in what HEW chair Rep. Heinz Hofschneider blamed to mismanagement of funds—allegations repeatedly denied by NMC officials. The hearing, the fifth in a series of investigation into the cash-strapped college and the government scholarship program in nearly a month, made several disclosures backing up the charges, including the hefty raise in the salary of some high-ranking officials.

Governor OKs monetary awards for workers

A bill that will provide up to $3,000 in unpaid compensation and repatriation cost for nonresidents awaiting awarded monetary damages was signed into law by Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio in another attempt to soothe angry guest workers seeking back wages and derail a federal takeover of local immigration and labor. The measure, hastily approved by the Legislature and the governor Friday, was put into motion upon recommendation of Rep. Don Young (R-Alaska), chairman of the House Resources Committee, during his visit last week. A group of alien workers, mostly Chinese, Bangladeshis and Filipinos, told Young and members of the committee in a meeting that they have yet to collect unpaid back wages provided for in administrative awards.

February 23, 2000

Flat tax system eyed

The House of Representatives is now laying the groundwork for the creation of a body of finance experts that will be tasked to review and draw up recommendations to change the existing CNMI tax system, Speaker Ben Fitial revealed yesterday. Mr. Fitial cited the need to institute measures that would simplify the current personal and business tax system in the Northern Marianas which, he said, is too complex and complicated. He said, however, that the lower house would carefully approach any element of tax reform to ensure the government continues to generate the necessary level of revenues needed to efficiently carry out essential community and public services.

OIA report on NMI unemployment rate disproved

The widespread use by apparel and tourism industries of nonresident workers from Asia has nothing to do with the alarming unemployment rate in the CNMI as claimed by the U.S. Department of the Interior, according to the accounting arm of the U.S. Congress. The General Accounting Office disputes claims by the interior department that the high rate of unemployment among U.S. citizens is caused by the garment and tourism industries or the foreign workers they employ. "We found no data that support the claim that unemployment in the CNMI is caused by the garment and tourist industries or by their use of foreign labor," the GAO February 2000 report said.

February 23, 2001

Cabrera gets 33-month jail term

Down to the final moments of his sentence hearing, former Finance Secretary Antonio R. Cabrera maintained yesterday his claim of innocence despite a jury verdict that convicted him guilty on three counts of theft before the US District Court. Finding the ex-government official liable to acts of theft concerning programs receiving federal funds, District Judge Alex R. Munson sentenced the 41-year-old defendant to two years and nine months incarceration. His 33-month jail term is to be followed by three years of supervised release. Further, the defendant has been ordered to pay $56,461.98 in restitution, a $15,000 fine, and $300 in special assessment.

Gang using Rota as transit point for ice

Customs officials are eyeing the possibility that a syndicate behind intercepted mails containing drugs is using Rota as its transit point. This, following the apprehension of another mail from Philippines two weeks ago by customs personnel detailed in Rota. A routine inspection conducted by a postal office staff yielded another Christmas musical card containing five grams of Ice.

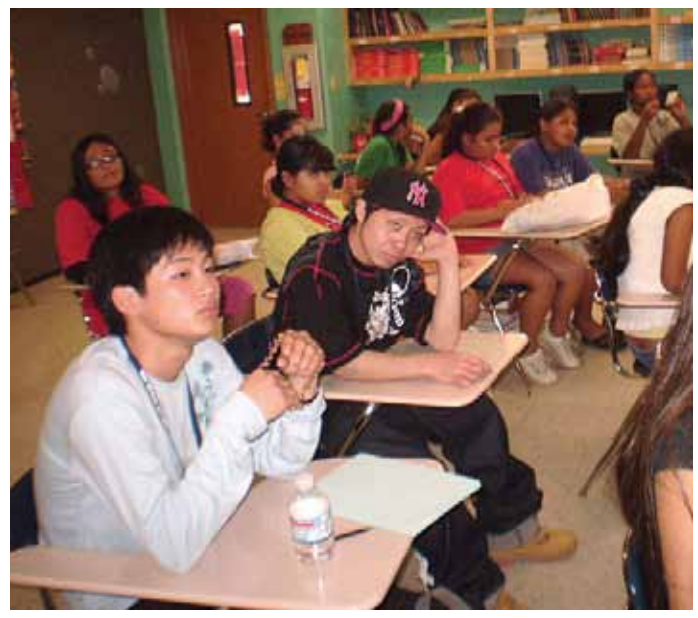
325 students take part in youth dev't summit

The 3rd Annual Youth Development Summit was held Saturday at Chacha Oceanview Junior High School, with 325 students and 50 community adult volunteers, exhibitors, and DYS staff participating.

The summit, which had the theme "Teen Nation: Strengthening Youth Through Strong Youth Partnership," was part of activities lined up for the 2009 Parent Leadership Month. Held in partnership with the Youth Development Program under the Division of Services and Department of Community & Cultural Affairs, Saturday's activity also brought in the participation of Teen Talk and Tweens Talk Too, from the CNMI Public School's System's Youth Development Program, Ayuda Network Inc., NMC-CREES, and other government agencies.

Sharleen Crisostimo, PSS Teen Talk and Tweens Talk Too adviser, said in an e-mail message that participants were able to use the powerful influence and creativity of teens to turn peer pressure from a negative to a positive. Participants also learned effective leadership and goal setting skills.

"Participants were able to learn clear messages that it is their responsibility to say 'No' to alcohol, and other forms of drugs, violence, sexual activity and other forms of negative behavior and they were empowered through availing the educational resources from various youth services providers," Crisostimo said.



The summit featured workshops on Suicide Prevention & Self Mutilation; Alcohol Prevention/Peer Pressure; Tobacco Prevention/Peer Pressure; Wellness: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity; Wellness: Emotional and Mental, Stress Management; STD's/HIV Prevention; Teen Pregnancy Prevention & Healthy Relationships/Peer Pressure; Communication and Improvement; Goal Setting, Time Management & College Preparation; and Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Questioning Youth.

The inspirational speaker was Ivan Mereb, STUCO president at the Northern Marianas College.

Exhibitors included NMC-CREES, NMC- Educational Talent Search Program, Division of Youth Services, DPS DARE/LEEP, HIV Prevention Program, Community Guidance Center, Workforce Investment Agency, Domestic Violence Intervention Center

The 3rd Annual Youth Development Summit Committee members include Debra A. Inos, chairperson, DYS, Youth Development Program Coordinator; Sharleen Crisostimo, vice chairperson, PSS Teen Talk and Tweens Talk Too adviser; Rose Castro and Polly Omechelang, NMC-CREES; and Diane Camacho, Ayuda Network Inc. ***(PR)***

NMC's IT staff to undergo fiber optic, cabling training

As part of the Northern Marianas College's increased efforts to expand administrative capacities and to enhance technology services for the campus community, members of the NMC Information Technology Department will undergo training focused on fiber optics installation, troubleshooting, and data cabling installation.

The training sessions will be facilitated by Community College's Electronics Department chair John Limtiaco and are scheduled to take place in the IT conference room on the NMC campus on Feb. 23–27, 2009, and March 2–6, 2009.

"These trainings are critically important for all the IT personnel to attend in order to be able to deploy, support, and maintain the fiber optics and data cabling [physical layer] of the NMC Gigabit Computer Network," said IT director Adrian Atalig.

"At the same time, these trainings will provide the staff with the knowledge and skills to prepare for the Electronic Technicians Association Fiber Optics Installer and the Data Cabling Installer Certification examinations," Atalig added. "This certification is important to ensure that the IT staff has the required credentials to support NMC's mission—critical networking infrastructure."

The IT department continues its efforts to upgrade and implement various projects that make the college's network faster, more stable, and increasingly more efficient. ***(NMC)***

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Opinion

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EDITORIAL

Knowing when to say no

Having thrown his support behind a $2.5-trillion rescue for the banking industry, a $787-billion economic stimulus package and a $75-billion foreclosure prevention initiative, President Obama will convene a "fiscal responsibility summit" Monday to help craft a strategy for addressing the burgeoning national debt. It's almost too late for that—a new Brookings Institution study says the debt will grow by an average of $1 trillion a year for the next decade. Nevertheless, we hope the summit can supply something missing from the new administration's sweeping bailout plans: a clear set of criteria for federal interventions. With Detroit automakers lining up for additional billions in loans, states teetering on the edge of default and industries begging for bailouts, the White House needs to learn when to say no.

One of the strengths of our economic system is the fact that the market, not the government, decides who wins and who loses. Sometimes, however, the market itself fails, triggering a vicious downward cycle. That's what happened when the housing bubble burst, giving the Bush administration a Hobson's choice: Stand back and risk the collapse of the interconnected banking industry, or step in to keep big firms from failing. If there was any doubt about the systemic nature of the problem, it was erased when Lehman Bros. went bankrupt and global credit markets went into seizure.

President Bush's approach was scattershot, prompting Obama to seek comprehensive responses, such as the stimulus package and the banking rescue. To some, however, the message was that Washington would be nursing every one of the wounded back to health, which it obviously can't do. Yet it's not clear from its initiatives where the administration draws the line on government rescues.

We think it should be drawn this way: The government intervenes only when there's a threat of epic collapse and temporary aid would prevent it. One way to get this point across is to tell General Motors and Chrysler that they aren't too big to fail. The companies returned to Washington this week with reorganization plans that called for almost $22 billion in new federal loans—$14 billion more than they earlier said they'd need—along with deep cuts in their workforces, dealership networks and model lines. Although GM executives said the new amount would be enough to carry them to a self-sustaining future, that pledge was undermined by their unrealistic sales projections. The implication is that the additional billions would lock the government into providing an expensive financial lifeline.

Rather than trying to direct the companies' restructuring, the administration should leave the job to bankruptcy courts, which were created for that purpose. It would still cost taxpayers billions to help GM and Chrysler move through the process in an orderly way and prevent the brands from becoming stigmatized beyond repair. There's no question that the bankruptcies would radiate across other companies and communities. But the problems aren't on the same scale as the ones in the credit markets, which are dragging us all down.

(c) 2009, Los Angeles Times

MY HOUSING PLAN WON'T STOP THE TIDAL WAVE OF FORECLOSURES...
NO ONE'S EXACTLY SURE WHAT'S IN THE STIMULUS PLAN...
WE'RE CLOSING GITMO! ...ASSUMING THAT'S EVEN POSSIBLE...
WE'RE MOVING ON AFGHANISTAN... IF WE ONLY HAD A STRATEGY...
THE BANKING PLAN'S DETAILS ARE COMING SOON... I THINK...
AT LEAST WE'RE UP TO SPEED ON TRANSPARENCY!
KEVIN SIERS ©2009 CHARLOTTE OBSERVER
OBAMA IN WONDERLAND

Netbook computers: Yes or no?

Editor's note: This column was originally intended for publication Friday, Feb. 20, 2009, but got stuck in Internet limbo.

By ED STEPHENS

Ed is a pilot, economist, and writer. He holds a degree in economics from UCLA and is a former U.S. naval officer. His column runs every Friday. Visit Ed at TropicalEd.com and SaipanBlog.com.

At first blush it sounds like the ultimate tool for tropical life: A tiny, dirt-cheap (under $300), Wi-Fi capable notebook (OK, "subnotebook" or "netbook") computer that can be toted anywhere. You can check the news over your Shirley's Special Omelet, update your blog over coffee, then head to Micro Beach to finish work on your blockbuster novel as Jimmy Buffet (or, in my case, Jerry Reed) plays from the hard drive.

Hey, sounds good. It's a temptation not only for tech-savvy people, but for newbies looking for an affordable entry-level machine.

On the latter note, a lot of families on Saipan are really hurting financially, so a small price tag holds the promise of allowing them to get a first-ever computer. About half the people I know who are buying these, or asking about them, are in the entry-level category.

So do you need one of these things? Does the promise meet the reality?

They've caught the world by storm. Although attempts to sell tiny notebooks actually stretch back a lot of years, the concept was more "toy" than "tool" until recently. That's when, in 2007, a Taiwanese company called ASUS unveiled the weirdly-named "Eee PC." I happened to be in Taiwan when the first (or what I believe were the first) models were hitting the streets, and I got my hands on one right away.

The bottom line on netbook computers is that there is no bottom line. You just have to decide for yourself. Yes, they are cute, but cute doesn't always do the trick. It just depends on the trick.

I can't think of a good size comparison. How about, a bit bigger than a VCR cassette?

Weight: A bit over two lbs. It didn't have a meaningful hard drive, but instead employed flash memory on the order of just 2- to 4-gigabytes or so. So, while technically it was very much a computer, in practical terms it struck me as more of an Internet appliance, a cute little tool for, say, checking your e-mail on the road.

The concept took off from there. Just about everyone makes these things now. A typical netbook, pretty much my benchmark for the genre, is the Acer Aspire One, one model of which boasts a 120 gigabyte hard drive, a dinky 8.9 inch screen, the Windows XP operating system (Linux is also a popular option), and 1-gibabyte of RAM. It doesn't have an optical (CD or DVD) drive, but external drives can be connected via USB. Price is about $299.99 in some cases, which is cheaper than some cell phones.

I think Acer is also Taiwanese. Here's a terrifying economic tidbit; despite its pioneering tech skills, Taiwan's economy has fallen over 8 percent (last quarter of 2008, year on year basis). Yikes! If those guys are in trouble, then nobody's immune.

Anyway, I've tried out many makes and models of netbooks. The keyboards don't happen to suit my grubby little paws, and my pals who are touch-typists report the same misgivings. On the other hand, plenty of people (maybe most people, for all I know) are perfectly happy with the keyboards.

This leads to the most fundamental truth about portable computers, be they notebooks, netbooks, or whatever: They fit everyone differently. I wouldn't buy a portable computer sight unseen any more than I'd buy a pair of shoes that are randomly-sized.

Saipan is a friendly enough place where you can usually get away with tapping a stranger on the shoulder and asking if you can try their computer for a few minutes, to see if you like it. Even 15 seconds on the keyboard is enough to reveal many design quirks.

I once tried a promising notebook computer (not a netbook) in a store, and I was all ready to buy it (the computer, not the store) but at the last minute I discovered that one of the "Shift" keys was in the wrong place. That would have been one miserable thing to own. And more recently I have talked to people who have bought portable computers with batteries that don't last even an hour. The fact is that with computers, you can't really take anything for granted.

But once I find a netbook model that I like, I'll buy a couple, so I can hide my more expensive computers in a vault or something.

The bottom line on netbook computers is that there is no bottom line. You just have to decide for yourself. Yes, they are cute, but cute doesn't always do the trick. It just depends on the trick.

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Letters to the Editor

The Commission on Autism

Maria and Marissa sounds like the name of a singing duet. And, yes, they represent a couple of voices. The first is precise and to the point, answering a query either with a crisp and absolute "Yes," or a definite and unwavering "No."

Lt. Gov. Tim Villagomez beamed with satisfaction as he recalled how he presided over the Legislature when the bill on the Commission on Autism was first introduced. He was delighted to sign the bill into law. "For you and the other children, the parents, caregivers and all concerned," he said, addressing the gathered audience at the Governor's Office conference room, "I sign this bill." He added as he looked directly to Maria, "Is that OK with you?" Without batting an eye, sitting up straight and shoulders squarely perpendicular to the floor, responding directly and without hesitation, Maria uttered an unequivocal, "Yes!"

Tears flowed down Marissa's cheeks as Maria reached out to touch and spread them on her Mom's skin. As a second voice, Marissa's is emotive in her free flowing articulation of what shakes and moves her. The unmistakable quiver on a voice exploding with an inner sense of urgency, and mirroring a profound sense of helplessness over a seemingly fathomless abyss over which the current understanding of her Maria's condition echoes in many inner chambers of numerous parents' hopes and dreams, even as her sentiments resonate insidiously in the hearts and minds of policy makers and implementers, and on that 'moving finger having writ' fated-ness came the creation of the Commission.

Marissa for sure keeps reminding herself to go beyond emotions into cold, logical and legal advocacy but her strength lies in a formidable voice that pleads, yearns, cajoles and demands. Marissa and her husband John, and their colleagues with the Autism Society of the CNMI have labored hard and pined long in their aspiration for what could only be a first step in a long and still arduous and torturous journey. Like many others this day, they would not let their seething anger, always present under the tiring demands of an awesome unfathomable mystery that has visited their children, to get in the way of an agenda.

"Eighteen months and 15 people to examine the current state, and plan the appropriate response, to the condition called autism, that's what we have here," the lieutenant governor summed up the law before the customary picture taking of those in attendance. Maria might be forgiven if she missed the cultural nuances, political overtones and economic undertones of the exchanges that followed, she was just content in pulling her back against her chair as the lieutenant governor said "Cheers" before the ubiquitous camera snapped its digital click. But the lieutenant governor expressed the consequent question of his audience to those who brought the bill for his signature: "When is the Commission scheduled to meet?"

I, too, have a Maria who turns 17 this year. Her brother, three years younger, has journeyed the same path of following almost a circuitous internal highway visibly headed nowhere save between the temples in their cranium. In the suburbs of Washington, D. C., in the mid-90s, their mother and I discussed the growing suspicion then that perhaps, the multiple vaccinations that the children received triggered a process resulting in the sudden termination of the production of synapses that connected brain cells to another, a common occurrence on children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders, ASD. The impact of the unknown hit the marriage so much that the center would not hold and caused a rift that produced a tectonic chasm half the size of the globe.

Marissa latched on to the metaphor of bridging the gaps that the Commission might provide in the tenuous delivery of services within the public sector in response to autism, from early diagnosis and intervention to post-educational social net of deliberate and sufficient care. The metaphor of bridges is very appropriate. For autistic children, were their neural systems compared to a computer, there is nothing wrong with the CPU, the printer, the modem and the scanner by themselves. It is the bus connection between the parts that is deficient, if not sorely missing. The Commission will do well to heed the experiences of parents even as they continue to take the initiative to enlighten themselves on the possible influences that led to their child(ren)'s disability, and the practical measures they can deploy to allow adaptation to functional routines, or at least to stem any further neural deterioration.

MHS English literature teacher Courtney Zietske, erstwhile Puget Sound business administrator, is one of those parents. With his wife Venus and a book he wrote in 2005 on what he discovered about thimerosal, the toxic mercury-laden preservative administered to many children's vaccines in the 90s, and the seeming attempts of those in positions of authority to suppress damaging information as well as protect pharmaceutical concerns from legal accountability, they hold a ticking bombshell in their hands. A legal combat looms.

With Vivian and Frank Cabrera's carefully kept documentation on the journey of their son, and the countless narratives that can pour out at the drop of a pin from members of the previous autism-focused PACA, the autism-Down-syndrome-and-cerebral-palsy-concerned STaRPO, and now, the children's-disability-inclusive Autism Society, the Commission should not be lacking of parents' insights and testimonies to come before its panels.

In the '90s when the UN declared the Decade of the Child, the late John Denver penned a plaintive song titled *I Want to Live*. I left Capital Hill after the signing with the tune hauntingly playing in my ear. Of my Maria Andrea and the Marias of the world, from the quiet murmurs of their hearts, these were the words I heard:

We are children of the ocean; we are children of the land.
We are children raised beneath the golden sand.
We are children of the forest, we are children of the plain;
And we cry out to the universe, our voices not in vain.
We want to live, we want to grow,
We want to be, we want to show,
That we can share, all we can give,
We want to be, we want to live.
Gaze once more upon the faces of the young ones filled with care,
Can you see that even children's dreams come true?
Will you join our parents' vision: liberation, yes, we dare!
Navigating unknown story, our glory to lay bare.
For the worker and the farmer, the dreamer and the sage,
For the native, and the foreigner as one,
Taotao tasi, taotao tano, a parent and a child,
We are all one human family upon a human globe.
We are standing all together face-to-face and arm-in-arm,
We are standing on a threshold of a dream –
Share the learning, glean the wisdom, not a child to leave behind,
We are forging human destiny, our future to define.

After the stillness that lingered in my soul, the lieutenant governor's question returned: So, when will the Commission commence meeting?

Jaime Vergara
via e-mail

'And therein lies the difference'

One day in L.A. a florist goes to a barber for a haircut. After the cut he asked about his bill and the barber replies, "I cannot accept money from you. I've gotten into a bit of a bind, and I'm doing community service this week." The florist was pleased and left the shop. When the barber opens his shop the next morning there is a thank you card and a dozen roses waiting for him at his door.

Later, a Latino cop from the LAPD comes in for a haircut, and when he tries to pay his bill, the barber again replies, "I cannot accept money from you. I'm doing community service this week." The cop is happy and leaves the shop. The next morning when the barber goes to open up there is a thank you card and a dozen donuts waiting for him at his door.

Later that day, a college professor from UCLA comes in for a haircut, and when he tries to pay his bill, the barber again replies, "I cannot accept money from you. I'm doing community service this week." The professor is very happy and leaves the shop. The next morning when the barber opens his shop, there is a thank you card and a dozen different books, such as *How to Improve Your Business* and *Becoming More Successful*.

Then, a visiting CNMI legislator traveling on a self-serving, meaningless trip with Benigno Fitial and other members of a bloated CNMI government entourage pretending to research peanut butter factories and shoemaking facilities comes in for a haircut. When he tries to pay his bill the barber again replies, "I cannot accept money from you. I'm doing community service this week." The surprised legislator is very happy at receiving this additional freebie and leaves the shop.

The next morning when the barber opens his shop, there's Benigno Fitial himself with 11 grinning legislators lined up waiting for free haircuts. One old graybeard even demands a free shave or else he'll author a resolution denouncing American barbers as *personae non grata* in his homeland.

And that, my friends, illustrates the real difference between honest hardworking stateside American citizens and the CNMI government.

Carlos J. Naranja Jr.
Boca Raton, FL

On federal lawsuit

The issue on the federal lawsuit has viciously divided our people over the last year. Proponents seem ready to take every federal dictate lying down. Opponents wanted the federal government to live up to its commitment inherent under the Covenant agreement.

As a continuing student of government, I find it woefully difficult bowing to the whims of the powers-that-be in Washington. What the federal government has violated can be found in the agreement. That some staffer has created his own Zoo Theory of what's good for the NMI isn't a reason to ignore the sentiment of the silent majority in slam-dunk fashion. It is citizenry's role to push for the strengthening of their democratic institutions. Isn't local governance entitled to its participatory role in a democracy?

If you disagree, then it was just last month that the first African-American became the 44th president of our country after 233 years. It took this long for fellow countrymen to allow the complete assimilation of *all* Americans into a democratic system of government that fulfills the enduring promise of our country of equality and the right of citizens in their pursuit of happiness. May we ask to be extended similar assimilation?

The defense of indigenous rights to a "greater degree of self-government" didn't spin out of thin air nor was it an accidental provision. A lot of thought and vision went into this provision fully aware that as more of our people are equipped with secondary education under their belt, the more capable we will be in the disposition of substantive issues under the umbrella of self-rule in a democracy.

In recent days, several of the states have adopted measures to guard their sovereign rights under the 10th Amendment. This was triggered by funds for all states under the stimulus package that included federal impositions beyond its enumerated powers. In the process, it permits the federal government to dictate even the formulation of policies. Our federal lawsuit is similar in fashion. We only wish to protect the rights of indigenous governance to a "greater degree of self-government" inherent under the Covenant.

This nouvelle indigenous struggle is best described in a nursery rhyme I learned in grammar school: "Many years ago our country wasn't free, we belong to England the land across the sea; but England wasn't kind to us and so we broke away; and that is how it happened that we form the USA."

We're not going to break away from our country nor must we allow our varied conquerors to divide us further. We must only seek real participation and assimilation into the principles or bedrock of American Democracy upon which it was founded. And this too, friends, is as American as American apple pie.

John S. DelRosario Jr.
As Gonno, Saipan

Finally, justice

I am very pleased by the decision of the Supreme Court in my case against the Scholarship Office and board. The decision issued is a showcase of the justice provided by our legal system, especially since it is one coming from the highest judicial officials.

From the beginning, this case was based upon the pursuit of justice. This victory is a victory not just for me, but also for our community. Let this be a message to the Scholarship Board and other boards that they have to follow the law, not create their own laws. Their decision to create their own rules and regulations led to this catastrophe that will require them to backtrack three years and recalculate the awards based upon the letter of the law. I hope that these board members and future members will hold themselves to a higher standard, especially when dealing with matters of education.

I owe my gratitude to my lawyer, Robert Torres, who took on this case purely because he saw the injustice committed by the board. Robert and my parents took the burden off my shoulders and onto theirs while I'm continuing my education.

To the youth, never give up. To the community, don't be scared of the government. Most importantly, always fight for what is right, even if that fight takes years to end.

Roselle Calvo
via e-mail

Thanks to JAJA Marine Sports

This past weekend, the waters were rough and we flipped a canoe. We had a difficult time trying to tow the canoe back to shore. Thanks to Clyde, Johnny and most especially to Rico, for helping us get the canoe back to shore. We really appreciate their concern and assistance.

Jeanolivia, Albert, Lorraine, Bob and Nancy
via fax

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Partly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers. East winds 20 to 25 mph.	Partly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers. East winds 20 to 25 mph.	Partly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers.
▲87° ▼77°	▲87° ▼77°	▲87° ▼77°	▲87° ▼77°	▲87° ▼77°

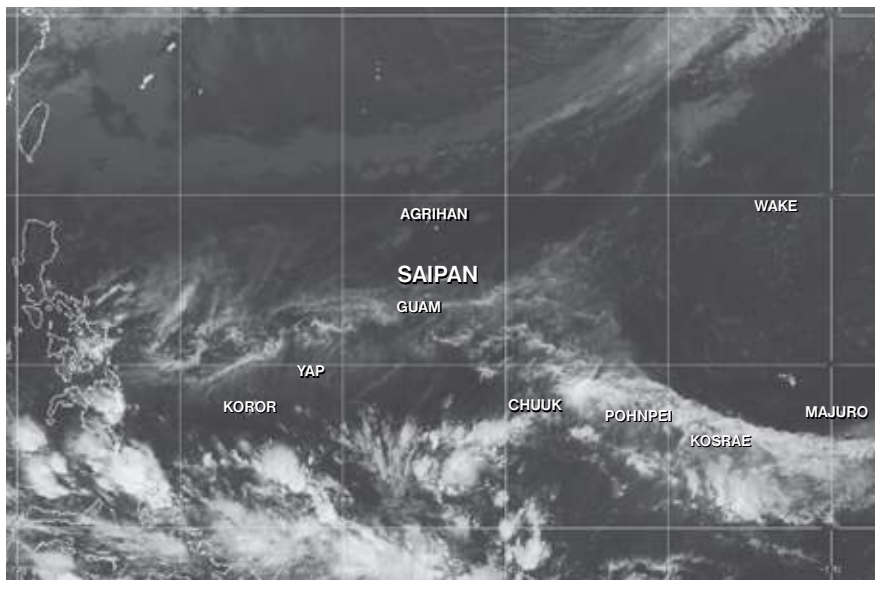
Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Cloudy	▲84	▼75
Palau	Showers	▲88	▼77
Yap	Showers	▲88	▼77
Chuuk	Cloudy	▲88	▼79
Pohnpei	Partly Sunny	▲86	▼75
Kosrae	Mostly Sunny	▲90	▼78
Majuro	Mostly Sunny	▲83	▼75

Around The Globe

Auckland	Mostly Sunny	▲72	▼60
Beijing	Cloudy	▲36	▼25
Hong Kong	Sunny	▲80	▼72
Honolulu	Mostly Cloudy	▲76	▼69
London	Cloudy	▲46	▼37
Los Angeles	Mostly Cloudy	▲68	▼50
Manila	Showers	▲89	▼74
Melbourne	Sunny	▲84	▼59
Miami	Cloudy	▲75	▼61
New York	Mostly Sunny	▲35	▼25
Osaka	Cloudy	▲51	▼43
Paris	Mostly Cloudy	▲46	▼33
Pusan	Cloudy	▲51	▼46
Rome	Cloudy	▲53	▼34
Salem	Cloudy	▲54	▼38
San Francisco	Cloudy	▲60	▼49
Seoul	Cloudy	▲45	▼29
Tokyo	Mostly Cloudy	▲48	▼40
Washington, DC	Sunny	▲40	▼24

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00AM, SUNDAY, FEB. 22, 2009
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A cold front extends southwestward from 25N150E to 23N142E then continues as a shear line to beyond 130E at 18N. Cloudiness and scattered light showers are found along and up to 150 miles northwest of this boundary. A near-equatorial trough runs northeastward from 3N130E to 5N150E to a weak circulation southeast of Chuuk near 5N153E then turns southeastward to EQ160E. Numerous showers and isolated thunderstorms are found between the equator and 4N from 140E to 152E. Also scattered showers and a few thunderstorms are occurring southwest of Chuuk between 4N and 8N from 146E to 151E. Trade-wind convergence is triggering scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms from Pohnpei eastward across Kosrae and the southern Marshall Islands between 3N and 8N from 156E to 160E and within 150 miles of a line from 6N160E to 4N170E to 4N180.

Tides

Saipan Harbor		
12:53 AM Today	Low Tide:	0.1 Feet
7:45 AM Today	High Tide:	1.8 Feet
1:16 PM Today	Low Tide:	1.0 Feet
6:18 PM Today	High Tide:	1.8 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:38 AM	6:23 PM
Tuesday	6:37 AM	6:23 PM
Wednesday	6:37 AM	6:24 PM
Thursday	6:36 AM	6:24 PM
Friday	6:36 AM	6:24 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	5:11 AM	4:53 PM
Tuesday	5:50 AM	5:43 PM
Wednesday	6:27 AM	6:32 PM
Thursday	7:03 AM	7:22 PM
Friday	7:40 AM	8:13 PM

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- BUSINESS
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- SAMU'T SARI
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  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

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- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

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- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

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Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

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- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 1, 2009

DEPARTURES

Saipan-Rota			
CO9597	11:50am	12:25pm	1,7
Saipan-Guam			
CO9317	5:00am	5:50am	Daily
CO9313	8:30am	9:20am	Daily
CO9597	11:50am	1:20pm	1,7 via Rota
CO9601	12:30pm	1:20pm	2,3,4,5,6
CO9603	3:30pm	4:20pm	Daily
CO9605	6:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
CO9599	9:30pm	10:20pm	Daily
Saipan-Narita			
NW 099	5:00am	7:35am	Daily
NW 078	8:20am	1:30pm	2,3,4,5,6,7
NW 075	4:55pm	7:30pm	Daily
Guam-Narita			
NW 73	4:10pm	7:00pm	Daily
NW 81	3:55pm	6:55pm	Daily
Saipan-Osaka			
OZ 119	4:00am	6:40am	1,4,6
NW 083	4:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
Guam-Osaka			
NW 79	4:45pm	7:35pm	Daily
Saipan-Nagoya			
NW 078	8:20am	11:05am	Daily
Guam-Nagoya			
NW 23	4:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
Saipan-Incheon			
OZ 604	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ 604	2:40am	6:30am	2,3,4,5,6,7
OZ 119	4:00am	11:25am	1,4,6 via Osaka
OZ 606	3:20pm	7:00pm	Daily
Saipan-Busan			
OZ 608	3:20am	6:50am	1,4,5,7
Saipan-Shanghai			
FM 844	2:50am	5:40am	2,6
Rota-Guam			
CO 9597	12:50pm	1:20pm	1,7
Guam-Palau			
CO 953	7:40pm	8:40pm	1,7
CO 893	5:50pm	6:50pm	3,5
Palau-Manila			
CO 893	7:35pm	9:10pm	3,5
Guam-Manila			
CO 893	5:50pm	9:10pm	3,5 via Koror
CO 933	8:00pm	9:40pm	Daily
PR 111	6:00am	7:50am	1,2,4,6,7
Nagoya-Manila			
NW 71	8:40pm	11:55pm	Daily
Incheon-Hongkong			
OZ 721	9:20am	12:00pm	Daily
OZ 723	7:45pm	10:35pm	Daily
OZ 7173	8:00pm	10:50pm	5,7
Narita-Manila			
NW 1	7:00pm	10:55pm	Daily

ARRIVALS

Rota-Saipan			
CO 9598	3:25am	4:00am	5,6
Guam-Saipan			
CO 9316	2:30am	3:20am	1,2,3,4,7
CO9598	2:30am	4:00am	5,6 via Rota
CO9596	7:00am	7:50am	Daily
CO9600	10:20am	11:10am	Daily
CO9602	2:00pm	2:50pm	Daily
CO9604	5:00pm	5:50pm	Daily
CO9606	8:00pm	8:50pm	Daily
Narita-Saipan			
NW 076	10:15am	2:40pm	Daily
NW 077	6:25pm	1:20am+1	2,3,4,5,6,7
NW 100	8:45pm	1:10am+1	Daily
Narita-Guam			
NW 74	9:45am	2:20pm	Daily
NW 82	10:30am	3:10pm	Daily
Osaka-Saipan			
OZ 120	9:50pm	2:20am+1	3,5,7
NW 084	10:40am	3:05pm	Daily
Osaka-Guam			
NW 80	10:30am	3:00pm	Daily
Nagoya-Saipan			
NW 077	9:00pm	1:20am+1	Daily
Nagoya-Guam			
NW 24	10:00am	2:30pm	Daily
Incheon-Saipan			
OZ 605	9:00am	2:20pm	Daily
OZ 603	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
OZ 120	7:10pm	2:20am+1	3,5,7 via Osaka
OZ 603	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1,2,3,4,5,6
Busan-Saipan			
OZ 607	9:00pm	2:10am+1	3,4,6,7
Shanghai-Saipan			
FM 843	7:15pm	1:50am+1	1,5
Guam-Rota			
CO 9598	2:30am	3:00am	5,6
Palau-Guam			
CO 954	2:30am	5:25am	1,2
CO 892	2:35am	5:30am	4,6
Manila-Palau			
CO 892	10:10pm	1:50am+1	3,5
Manila-Guam			
CO 892	10:10pm	5:30am+1	3,5 via Koror
CO 934	11:10pm	4:40am+1	Daily
PR 110	10:10pm	4:00am+1	1,3,5,6,7
Manila-Nagoya			
NW 72	6:30am	11:05am	Daily
Hongkong-Incheon			
OZ 724	12:30am	4:50am	Daily
OZ 7183	12:45am	5:05am	1,4,6
OZ 722	1:30pm	5:45pm	Daily
Manila-Narita			
NW 2	7:45am	12:40pm	Daily

Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CO: Continental; FM: Shanghai Airlines; PR: Philippine Airlines; NW: Northwest; OZ: Asiana
ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota			
FRE 100	7:00am	7:30am	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 100	7:50am	8:20am	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 200	9:00am	9:30am	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 200	9:50am	10:15am	Daily
Guam-Rota			
FRE 300	4:00pm	4:30pm	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 300	4:50pm	5:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 400	6:00pm	6:30pm	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 400	6:45pm	7:15pm	Daily
Saipan-Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45am	6:55am	Daily
FRE 103	7:30am	7:40am	Daily
FRE 105	8:00am	8:10am	Daily
FRE 107	8:40am	8:50am	Daily
FRE 109*	9:10am	9:20am	Daily
FRE 111*	10:45am	10:55am	Daily

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
FRE 113	11:40am	11:50am	Daily
FRE 115	1:00pm	1:10pm	Daily
FRE 117	2:30pm	2:40pm	Daily
FRE 119	4:00pm	4:10pm	Daily
FRE 121	4:40pm	4:50pm	Daily
FRE 123 *	5:40pm	5:50pm	Daily
FRE 125 *	6:00pm	6:10pm	Daily
Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**			
FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE 126	6:20pm	6:30pm	Daily

Business

Meltdown 101: Will the new housing aid help me?

By J.W. ELPHINSTONE and ALAN ZIBEL
AP REAL ESTATE WRITERS

Between the $75 billion foreclosure plan President Barack Obama revealed on Wednesday and the $787 billion economic stimulus he signed a day earlier, the government is promising a range of programs aimed at getting new help to homeowners.

But not everyone who needs help will get it. While some homeowners who owe more than their house is worth will get help, many of those who are most severely "under water" in their mortgages won't get bailed out.

So who does qualify for the assistance? What exactly will they get - and when will they get it?

Here are some questions and answers about the latest round of aid for homeowners.

Q: What if I'm a homeowner on the brink of foreclosure?

A: Homeowners who are behind on their mortgage payments or who are struggling to keep current may qualify for a mortgage modification under the Homeowner Affordability and Stability Plan that Obama unveiled Wednesday.

To qualify, the house must be your primary residence, your mortgage payment must be greater than 31 percent of your monthly gross income and your loan mustn't exceed current Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac loan limits, which vary by region and max out at nearly $729,750.

Owners of two-, three- and four-unit properties are eligible as long as they live in one unit as a primary residence. Only first mortgages are eligible for a modification.

More detailed requirements will be available March 4.

Q: What if I'm not near foreclosure? Do I get any assistance?

A: Borrowers who are current on their mortgages but can't refinance into lower interest-rate loans because their homes have fallen in value are eligible to refinance into a 30- or 15-year, fixed-rate loan under the plan, but only if their loan is held by mortgage finance companies Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac.

To qualify, homeowners can't owe more than 105 percent of their home's current value on their first mortgage. For example, if your home is worth $100,000, your first mortgage can't exceed $105,000.

Borrowers with a second mortgage are eligible as long as their first mortgage isn't more than 105 percent of their home's value. The value of your property will be determined after you apply to refinance.

Skeptics say it's going to be difficult for borrowers to figure out whether their loan is held by Fannie or Freddie. "I'm not sure people are always going to get a straight answer," said Bert Ely, a banking industry consultant in Alexandria, Va.

Q: Any breaks for first-time homebuyers?

A: Under the economic stimulus plan that Obama signed Tuesday, first-time homebuyers who purchase a home between Jan. 1 and Dec. 1 will be eligible for a tax credit of 10 percent of the value of the home, up to $8,000.

Homeowners don't have to pay back this credit over the next 15 years, the way they had to with the $7,500 tax credit enacted last summer. However, homebuyers would have to repay the credit if they sold their homes within three years.

First-time buyers are defined as those who haven't owned a house for at least three years.

Q: Any other breaks for current homeowners?

A: Homeowners also can get a tax credit of up to $1,500 by making their homes more energy-efficient this year or next. Many projects qualify, such as installing energy-efficient windows, doors, furnaces or air conditioners, or adding insulation. Homeowners can get back 30 percent of their expenses, up to $1,500.

Q: Will there be more assistance down the road?

A: The Obama administration is working with lawmakers to pass a bill that will allow bankruptcy judges to modify the terms of primary home loans in court.

The lending industry is fighting this plan, arguing that it will make lending a risky proposition in the future. But with support mounting, the industry's efforts are primarily focused on limiting the scope of the bankruptcy proposal, rather than blocking it completely.

Q: How soon can I expect to take advantage of these benefits or aid?

A: The refinancing and loan modification programs start March 4. The first-time homebuyer tax credit is in effect from the first of the year through the end of November. The "green" home tax credit applies to energy-efficient improvements made through 2010.

Q: What should I do until March 4?

A: If you're interested in refinancing or applying for a loan modification, collect all necessary documents to give to your lender.

These include your most recent pay stubs and/or other documents detailing the income you receive, your most recent tax return, information about your second mortgage if you have one, payment information on your credit cards if you carry a monthly balance and payment information on all other loans, like student loans and car loans.

Q: What if I'm facing foreclosure now, and can't wait until March 4?

A: Contact your mortgage servicer or mortgage lender. Many lenders said they will postpone foreclosure sales on home loans that could qualify for the modification.

LOSS IN COMPENSATION AP

In this Oct. 10, 2008 file photo, a businessman walks his son to school as they pass the New York Stock Exchange, in New York. In the neighborhood surrounding the New York Stock Exchange, many finance industry employees say they are more worried about keeping their jobs than they are about their paychecks dwindling. But, in the performance based financial industry, some believe the loss in compensation goes with the territory. Those finance industry workers still standing after the brutal banking collapses of the past year had to contend with a major slash in bonus pay - with many losing as much as one-third of their total compensation. Then the Obama administration imposed a pay cap of $500,000 on certain senior executives whose companies receive substantial bailout money.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Small Oregon bank is 14th to fail in '09

NEW YORK (AP)—Regulators on Friday closed Silver Falls Bank in Silverton, Ore.—the 14th federally insured institution to fail this year, and the second based in Oregon. Silver Falls Bank, a community bank that opened in May 2000, had $131.4 million in assets and $116.3 million in deposits as of Feb. 9. The last Oregon-based bank to close was Beaverton-based Pinnacle Bank last week. Citizens Bank of Corvallis, Ore., is assuming Silver Falls Bank's deposits. It also is taking over its three branches and buying about $13 million in assets, including cash, securities and overdraft loans. The Federal Deposit Insurance Corp., appointed receiver of Silver Falls Bank, will retain the bank's remaining assets.

Chinese utility tries to join electricity pioneers

BEIJING (AP)—As companies abroad slash spending to ride out a global slump, China's biggest utility is pouring money into the multibillion-dollar field of electric power transmission. State Grid Corp. says it began operation in January of a 1 million-volt commercial power line, which is much more powerful than the 765,000-volt systems used in the United States and elsewhere. It said "ultra-high voltage" transmission systems will be able to link cities to distant hydroelectric dams from Brazil to Africa. "This is a milestone in the history of the power industry," boasted a State Grid vice president, Lu Jian. The effort reflects Beijing's broader ambition to transform China from a low-cost manufacturing nation into a creator of profitable technology. New, powerful transmission systems may also help Beijing clear smog from China's cities by locating new coal-fired power plants closer to mines instead of in urban areas.

Journal Register files for bankruptcy protection

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—The Journal Register Co., publisher of the New Haven (Conn.) Register and other newspapers, filed for Chapter 11 protection Saturday, joining at least two other publishers that turned to bankruptcy court in recent months amid slumping advertising revenue and circulation. The Yardley, Pa.-based company said in a statement posted Saturday on its Web site that it expects to operate as usual during restructuring and didn't anticipate any interruption in business. "We intend to emerge from the Chapter 11 process stronger, leaner and more financially viable in the current environment. ... Our business will continue its normal operations and we will publish content as usual throughout this process," Chairman and Chief Executive James W. Hall said in the statement. The publisher has been struggling for months with sagging circulation and advertising revenues and a massive debt, which pushed its credit rating into junk status.

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REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The Commonwealth Ports Authority is soliciting competitive sealed proposals for the following:

One (1) Tractor Mower
For the Tinian International Airport:

The equipment should include at a minimum:

1.	STRUCTURE	Protective Rollover Structure with open cab and mechanical seat suspension system	
2.	MOWER DECK	To include a fifteen foot (15') mower deck – mower deck to be winged type with three separate blades. Wings must be capable of being adjusted individually	
3.	ROTATING BEACON	FAA approved colored rotating beacon mounted on roof	
4.	RADIO	Mounted air-to-ground radio with headphones and microphone, mounted directly under roof of cab or encased for weather proofing	
5.	COLOR	Airport yellow in color	
6.	ENGINE	80 horsepower or more	
7.	TRANSMISSION	Standard	
8.	FUEL	Diesel	
9.	CYLINDERS	4	
10.	CHASSIS	4x2 2WD	
11.	TIRES	FRONT - 7.50-16	REAR – 16.9-30
12.	MANUALS	Technical and Parts Manuals for both tractor and mower must be provided	
13.	DELIVERY	MUST BE DELIVERED TO THE TINIAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT	

A pre-proposal conference will be scheduled and held only upon request by proposers. However, attendance is not mandatory.

Proposals are to be submitted in a sealed envelope marked with the respective RFP description to the office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Ports Authority, second floor of the arrival building, Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, no later than 4:30 p.m., Friday, March 20, 2009.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority reserves the right to reject any or all proposals for any reason and to waive any defects in the proposals if determined by the Ports Authority to be in its best interest. All proposals shall become the property of the Commonwealth Ports Authority. For additional information, please contact the Executive Director at 237-6500.

/s/ EFRAIN F. CAMACHO, P.E.
Executive Director/Contracting Officer

Date: February 19, 2009

Nation

Official: Obama wants to halve budget deficit

By LIZ SIDOTI
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

WASHINGTON (AP)—Barack Obama wants to cut the federal deficit in half by the end of his first term, mostly by scaling back Iraq war spending, raising taxes on the wealthiest and streamlining government, an administration official said Saturday as the president worked to finalize his first budget request.

Obama's proposal for the 2010 fiscal year that begins Oct. 1 projects that the estimated $1.3 trillion deficit he has inherited from former President George W. Bush will be halved to $533 billion by 2013. That's a difference of 9.2 percent of the overall economy now vs. 3 percent in four years.

"We can't generate sustained growth without getting our deficits under control," Obama said in his weekly radio and Internet address that seemed to preview his intentions. He said his budget will be "sober in its assessments, honest in its accounting, and lays out in detail my strategy for investing in what we need, cutting what we don't, and restoring fiscal discipline."

He's expected to outline some broad themes of his budget request Monday at a White House summit on fiscal policy and touch on it during his first speech to Congress on Tuesday evening. He is slated to officially send at least a summary of it to Congress on Thursday, barely a week after his $787 billion economic stimulus plan becoming law.

■■■

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Barack Obama addresses a joint session of Congress Tuesday night, giving a State of the Union-like speech. With the recession well into its second year, expect the remarks to be longer on the economy than on foreign affairs. The president is expected to show Americans how all the pieces fit together to make the economy sound again. There's the $787 billion just-signed stimulus bill, plus an even more expensive mix of rescues for the financial industry, auto companies and troubled mortgage holders.

■■■

Obama's budget also is expected to take steps toward his campaign promises of establishing universal health care and lessening the country's reliance on foreign oil.

The official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because the president has not yet released his budget, said Obama hopes to achieve his deficit-reduction goal by generating savings as he follows through on three core campaign promises over the next four years.

MEMORIAL SERVICE AP

Hundreds of mourners walk out of St. Joseph's University Church after a memorial to remember a Sept. 11 widow killed in a commuter plane crash and the owner of the suburban Buffalo home that was destroyed by the crash. The two were among the 50 people who died when Flight 3407 from Newark, N.J., fell from the sky as it approached the Buffalo airport on Feb. 12, killing all 49 people aboard and a man who was in the house. Beverly Eckert, 57, was aboard the Continental Connection turboprop on her way to her hometown to celebrate what would have been the 58th birthday of her late husband Sean Rooney. Another service, in an auditorium at the Clarence Middle School that Douglas Wielinski's four daughters attended, honored the owner of the two-story house who died when the plane fell on the Clarence home.

Gruesome killing poses another test for US Muslims

By ERIC GORSKI
AP RELIGION WRITER

The crime was so brutal, shocking and rife with the worst possible stereotypes about their faith that some U.S. Muslims thought the initial reports were a hoax.

The harsh reality of what happened in an affluent suburb of Buffalo, N.Y.—the beheading of 37-year-old Aasiya Hassan and arrest of her estranged husband in the killing—is another crucible for American Muslims.

Here was a couple that appeared to be the picture of assimilation and tolerance, co-founders of a television network that aspired to improve the image of Muslims in a post 9-11 world.

Now, as Muzzammil "Mo" Hassan faces second-degree murder charges, those American Muslims who have spoken out are once again explaining that their faith abhors such horrible acts, and they are using the tragedy as a rallying cry against domestic violence.

The killing and its aftermath raise hard questions for Muslims—about gender issues, about distinctions between cultural and religious practices, and about differing interpretations of Islamic texts regarding the treatment of women.

"Muslims don't want to talk about this for good reason," said Saleemah Abdul-Ghafur, a Muslim author and activist. "There is so much negativity about Muslims, and it sort of perpetuates it. The right wing is going to run with it and misuse it. But we've got to shine a light on this issue so we can transform it."

Arrest warrant prepared in Chandra Levy case

WASHINGTON (AP)—Investigators in the 2001 slaying of Chandra Levy have prepared an arrest warrant for a Salvadoran immigrant convicted of similar attacks in the park where the former intern disappeared, a person close to the investigation said Saturday.

The person told The Associated Press that Ingmar Guandique's arrest is imminent and an official announcement is expected soon. The person was not authorized to discuss the case publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Levy had just completed an internship with the U.S. Bureau of Prisons when she went missing in May 2001 in Washington, D.C. The 24-year-old was wearing jogging clothes when she vanished, and her remains were discovered in Rock Creek Park a year later.

Authorities questioned former U.S. Rep. Gary Condit in Levy's disappearance, but he was never a suspect in her death. Condit was reportedly having an affair with Levy, and the negative publicity from the case was cited as a main reason the California lawmaker lost re-election in 2002.

Guandique, 27, has denied any involvement in Levy's disappearance and killing. However, investigators interviewed him in the Levy case after he was convicted of attacking two women joggers in Rock Creek Park shortly after her disappearance.

Guandique was sentenced to 10 years in federal prison for those attacks. The federal Bureau of Prisons lists an inmate in California with the same sentence and age, but with the spelling Guandigue instead of Guandique. A message seeking comment was not returned.

Source: Feds interviewed Burris about Blagojevich

CHICAGO (AP)—Federal authorities interviewed U.S. Sen. Roland Burris on Saturday as they continued their corruption investigation of former Gov. Rod Blagojevich, according to a person familiar with the matter.

Burris, who left his home for several hours Saturday, declined to talk to reporters standing outside. Earlier in the week, he said federal investigators wanted to talk to him about their probe into Blagojevich. Burris said his attorneys had been trying to set up a meeting with investigators for some time.

A person familiar with the matter confirmed Saturday's meeting to The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity because the matter was confidential.

Burris spokesman Jim O'Connor declined comment, as did U.S. attorney's office spokesman Randall Samborn.

The Chicago Tribune, the Chicago Sun-Times and WMAQ-TV, citing people they did not name, reported that the meeting occurred at the Chicago offices of Burris' lawyer. Messages left Saturday for the lawyer, Timothy Wright III, were not immediately returned.

The reports said the meeting had been delayed for weeks and was not related to investigations into Burris' testimony before state lawmakers last month about his contacts with people close to Blagojevich.

Blagojevich was arrested Dec. 9 on federal corruption charges, including allegations that he tried to sell or trade President Barack Obama's vacant U.S. Senate seat for money or favors. He shocked everyone by naming Burris to the seat Dec. 30.

ACROSS THE NATION

Boy charged with killing dad's pregnant girlfriend

WAMPUM, Pa. (AP)—An 11-year-old boy shot his father's pregnant girlfriend in the back of the head while she was lying in bed in their western Pennsylvania farmhouse, then got on the school bus and went to school, authorities said Saturday. Jordan Brown was charged Saturday as an adult in the shooting death of 26-year-old Kenzie Marie Houk, who was 8 months pregnant, Lawrence County District Attorney John Bongivengo said at a news conference. Houk's family and friends, who gathered at her parents' house Saturday night, told The Associated Press that Houk had had problems with the boy in the past. Brown, the son of Houk's live-in boyfriend, was charged with criminal homicide and criminal homicide of an unborn child. He was being held in Lawrence County Jail.

Arrest in deaths of Curry ex-girlfriend, her baby

CHICAGO (AP)—Police said Saturday they had arrested a suspect in the slayings of the former girlfriend of New York Knicks' player Eddy Curry and her infant daughter. Police spokeswoman Laura Kubiak confirmed Saturday that one person was in custody. She said charges were pending. Kubiak said police believe the person under arrest killed Nova Henry, 24, and her 9-month-old daughter, Ava, who were found dead of multiple gunshot wounds in their apartment on Jan. 24. Henry was the mother of ex-Chicago Bulls player Curry's 3-year-old son. The boy was found unharmed at the scene.

Octuplet mom and doctor benefited from alliance

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Long before she gave birth to her octuplets, Nadya Suleman delivered for her fertility specialist. Like clockwork, she had babies every year but one between 2001 and 2006. The six children she had during that period accounted for a big share of the success stories at Dr. Michael Kamrava's clinic. And Kamrava touted his feats with Suleman on the local news. But that track record - together with the birth of the octuplets on Jan. 26 - has raised eyebrows among doctors and ethicists who wonder whether Kamrava disregarded professional standards and used Suleman to boost his stats and improve his standing in the highly competitive and lucrative field.

Asia

Abu Sayyaf's new generation threatens Philippines

By JIM GOMEZ
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Not long ago, the al-Qaida-linked Abu Sayyaf group was dismissed as all but dead, thanks to a much-heralded joint effort against terrorism by the U.S. and the Philippine military.

Now there is fear that the Abu Sayyaf may be coming back.

The group is blamed for a spate of kidnappings in recent months, including the latest—that of a Sri Lankan peace worker on southern Basilan Island earlier this month. Abu Sayyaf raised more than 70 million pesos ($1.5 million) last year through ransoms, and its ranks rose to 400 members last year from 383 in 2007, a confidential government report noted. Also, new leaders are rising to take the place of those captured by U.S.-backed troops.

The rebirth of Abu Sayyaf raises renewed fears of terrorism. So far Abu Sayyaf has focused on raising money through kidnappings, but it is likely to pursue high-profile assaults to reassert its stature as a terror group, the report noted. Abu Sayyaf has also allowed foreign militants, mostly members of the regional terror group Jemaah Islamiyah, to make the region their home.

"As long as they are there, they can provide safe haven for Jemaah Islamiyah where they can train the next generation of bombers and terrorists. That's why they're a threat," said Col. William Coultrup, who heads the U.S. counterterrorism forces in Mindanao.

Abu Sayyaf, which means "Father of the Swordsman" in Arabic, was founded in 1991 in Basilan province and supported by Asian and Middle Eastern radical groups. It came to the attention of the U.S. in 2001, when the group kidnapped three Americans among 20 people taken from a tony Philippine resort.

Abu Sayyaf was also thought to be sheltering Indonesian members of Jemaah Islamiyah, including Umar Patek and Dulmatin. The two are suspected of masterminding the Bali nightclub bombings that killed 202 people in 2002, and then fleeing to Abu Sayyaf strongholds in Mindanao to evade an anti-terror crackdown in Indonesia.

The Phillipine military did not have the funds for a full-out assault against Abu Sayyaf, so American troops came in with weapons, combat training and surveillance. They helped rein in a brief but brutal era of mass kidnappings, bombings and beheadings by the militants. Washington has poured millions of dollars into the Philippines in military assistance and civic projects.

Amid its problems in Iraq, Washington hailed the success against Abu Sayyaf, and life and commerce bounced back on Basilan. But in 2004, Abu Sayyaf and Indonesian militants were blamed for a bombing that ignited an inferno in a ferry near Manila Bay, killing 116 people. Abu Sayyaf also espoused a more violent "jihad," or holy war, in Mindanao, where more than 120,000 people have died in decades-long Muslim separatist unrest.

Last year Abu Sayyaf kidnapped at least 12 people in Jolo, Basilan and three other southern provinces, including a TV news team, according to the government report. Several captives have been ransomed off since, but 10, including three Red Cross workers taken on Jan. 15, remain in Abu Sayyaf's hands. Snatched from a car at gunpoint on Sulu province's Jolo Island after inspecting a jail water project, the missing Red Cross workers—two Europeans and a Filipina—are being held in the lush jungle.

On Feb. 13, Sri Lankan peace activist Umar Jaleel was snatched from his Basilan residence.

Abu Sayyaf's comeback is led by a new generation of leaders, said Maj. Gen. Juancho Sabban, who heads a Jolo anti-terrorism task force.

"All the Abu Sayyaf's ideologues are dead, the ones left behind are bandits," Sabban said. "The support they're counting on from other countries has vanished. Now, everybody's on his own, trying to raise money through kidnappings. They say they're fighting for a cause? No way."

Out of the 24 original leaders and militants whose faces were on a wanted poster widely distributed across the sprawling archipelago, only nine remain at large. The rest are dead or in jail, their faces marked off one by one. Abu Sayyaf's oldest, ailing commander, one-armed Radulan Sahiron, is missing, and vanished after a Dec. 7 clash that killed his cherished white horse, according to Sabban.

Among the new leaders is the colorful Albader Parad, who was just a scrawny foot soldier with an M203 grenade launcher dangling from his small frame nine years ago. Parad was involved in a 2000 mass kidnapping from the Sipadan resort in nearby Malaysia that netted 10 Europeans and 11 other people. When the kidnappers allowed a group of journalists to visit the hostages, Parad swiped the watch of an Associated Press reporter.

A military dossier seen by the AP described Parad as coming from a poor family where most relatives belonged to the Abu Sayyaf or had links to it. He has amassed 20 million pesos (more than $400,000) from a string of early 2000 abductions, some of which was invested by relatives in passenger transport and coconut farmlands, according to the military dossier.

"We want the military to pull out. If not, we won't talk to anyone," Parad said in a video aired in early February by the ABS-CBN news network, boldly showing his face to the camera while a bunch of masked gunmen stood behind him in the woods near Jolo's Indanan township.

Behind the scenes, there are widespread reports that Parad is privately seeking money to free the hostages.

Parad was one of the earliest new Abu Sayyaf commanders to emerge, but he has plenty of violent company at the top. He has been joined by at least three others, according to the government security threats report and a military official.

The report said two new commanders now lead their own factions—Nurhassan Jamiri from Basilan and Sulaiman Pattah from Jolo, both predominantly Muslim provinces in the country's most destitute region.

Jamiri, who is in his 20s, has been linked to kidnappings and the beheading of 10 marines during a 2007 clash. Pattah, a one-armed militant, gained notoriety for allegedly helping lead last year's kidnapping of popular TV news anchor Ces Drilon and her two crewmen in Jolo.

Another new commander is Furuji Indama, marine Lt. Col. Leonard Vincent Teodoro told the AP. He helps lead the same faction as Jamiri and has been blamed for kidnappings and other terrorist attacks in Basilan, said Teodoro, who has overseen assaults against the two.

Even the government concedes that the battle against one of Southeast Asia's most violent groups is far from over.

"I think they've morphed into something else, just like ... criminal gangs," Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro told the AP.

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
State Board of Education
Public School System
P. O. Box 501370, Saipan, MP 96950

INVITATION FOR BID
IFB 09-009

The CNMI Public School System is soliciting competitive sealed bids for the purchase, delivery, installation, and assembly of **Desktop & Laptop Computer Systems, other equipments and Accessories for Garapan Elementary School (GES).** Detailed information on the Scope of Work is available at the PSS Procurement & Supply Office located on the 3rd floor of the NMI Retirement Fund Building, Capitol Hill, Saipan, MP 96950.

All proposals shall be in a sealed envelope face marked "IFB 09-009" containing one (1) original and three (3) copies and shall be submitted to the PSS Procurement and Supply Office no later than **March 27, 2009 at 10:00 a.m.** Responsibility Determination documents shall be placed in a separate envelope marked "IFB 09-009, CONFIDENTIAL - Responsibility Determination" (one (1)-original and one (3) copies). Any bid after the aforementioned date and time will not be accepted under any circumstance.

Technical questions shall be in writing and addressed to Mr. Juan D. Babauta, PSS Acting Procurement & Supply Officer, via fax # (670) 664-3791. Alternatively, questions may be e-mailed to the following address: ***babautajd@pss.cnmi.mp.***

The Public School System reserves the right to award single or multiple awards or to reject any or all proposals, in whole or in part, if to do so is in the best interest of the Public Shool System.

All proposals shall become the property of the Public School System.

/S/ Rita A. Sablan, Ed.D.
Commissioner of Education

/S/ Juan D. Babauta
Acting, P&S Officer

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
State Board of Education
Public School System
P. O. Box 501370, Saipan, MP 96950

INVITATION FOR BID
IFB 09-010

The CNMI Public School System is soliciting competitive sealed bids for the procurement of **Bottled Water and Delivery Service.** Detailed information on the Scope of Work is available at the PSS Procurement & Supply Office located on the 3rd floor of the NMI Retirement Fund Building, Capitol Hill, Saipan, MP 96950.

All proposals shall be in a sealed envelope face marked "IFB 09-010" containing one (1) original and three (3) copies and shall be submitted to the PSS Procurement and Supply Office no later than **March 27, 2009 at 10:00 a.m.** Responsibility Determination documents shall be placed in a separate envelope marked "IFB 09-010, CONFIDENTIAL - Responsibility Determination" (one (1)-original and one (1) copy). Any bid after the aforementioned date and time will not be accepted under any circumstance.

Technical questions shall be in writing and addressed to Mr. Juan D. Babauta, PSS Acting Procurement & Supply Officer, via fax # (670) 664-3791. Alternatively, questions may be e-mailed to the following address: ***babautajd@pss.cnmi.mp.***

Contractors are required to submit with their proposal, a copy of their valid CNMI Business License.

The Public School System reserves the right to award single or multiple awards or to reject any or all proposals, in whole or in part, if to do so is in the best interest of the Public Shool System.

All proposals shall become the property of the Public School System.

/S/ Rita A. Sablan, Ed.D.
Commissioner of Education

/S/ Juan D. Babauta
Acting, P&S Officer

ASIA

44 dead, others trapped in China mine gas blast

AP

In this photo released by China's Xinhua News Agency, rescue workers carry a body of a victim at a coal mine in north China's Shanxi Province, Sunday, Feb. 22, 2009.

BEIJING (AP)—At least 44 miners died and 21 remained trapped underground after a gas blast ripped through a coal mine in northern China on Sunday, state media said.

The official Xinhua News Agency said the pre-dawn blast occurred while 436 workers were in the Tunlan Coal Mine in Gujiao city near Taiyuan, the capital of Shanxi province.

Rescuers said the death toll had risen to 44 by 11 a.m. local time, Xinhua said in a brief dispatch without providing details. State television channel CCTV reported that 21 workers remained trapped.

Earlier reports said 340 miners had escaped but 96 were trapped underground. Those reports said 11 miners had died after being taken to hospitals.

An official with the provincial government duty office confirmed the accident, but did not have any details. He would give only his surname Chen.

The mine is owned by Shanxi Jiaomei Group, China's largest producer of coking coal and an operator of 28 mines.

US: 13 civilians died in Afghan strike

KABUL (AP)—An operation the American military at first described as a "precision strike" instead killed 13 Afghan civilians and only three militants, the U.S. said Saturday, three days after sending a general to the site to investigate.

Civilian casualties have been a huge source of friction between the U.S. and Afghan President Hamid Karzai, who has stepped up demands that U.S. and NATO operations kill no civilians and that Afghan soldiers take part in missions to help prevent unwanted deaths.

A U.S. military statement said the decision to dispatch a general to the western province of Herat to investigate shows how seriously the U.S. takes civilian casualties. The U.S. rarely releases the findings of civilian casualty investigations, and the disclosure this time could show the effect of Karzai's criticisms.

The U.S. military originally said 15 militants were killed Tuesday in a coalition operation in the Gozara district of Herat province, but Afghan officials said six women and two children were among the dead, casting doubt on the U.S. claim.

Tiger kills 2 loggers in west Indonesia

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP)—A Sumatran tiger mauled two illegal loggers to death in western Indonesia, bringing to five the number of people killed by the critically endangered cats in less than a month, a conservationist said Sunday.

The tiger attacked a 50-year-old man and his 18-year-old son early Saturday while they slept next to a pile of stolen wood in a protected forest on Sumatra island, about 375 miles (600 kilometers) west of the capital Jakarta, said Didy Wurdjanto of the state conservation agency.

Three people were killed in two separate attacks in late January in the area. Park rangers last week trapped an adult tigress believed responsible for the deaths and it was being relocated.

About 40 people have been killed by tigers on Sumatra between 2000-2004, according to the agency.

The Sumatran tiger is the world's most critically endangered tiger subspecies.

'NKorea may be ready to test-fire missile'

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—North Korea could be ready to test-fire a missile within days as satellite imagery has shown increased activity at a missile site over the past 48 hours, a respected defense publication reported.

A significant increase in launch preparations has occurred at the Musudan-ni missile site on the communist country's northeastern coast, said Joseph S. Bermudez Jr., a senior analyst at Jane's Information Group who specializes in North Korean defense and intelligence matters.

"The latest satellite images ... indicate that North Korea is preparing to launch either a prototype Taepodong 2 intermediate-range ballistic missile or a Paektusan 2 space launch vehicle within a matter of days," Jane's Defence Weekly said in a report issued Friday in London.

World

US tests Iraq exit routes

BAGHDAD (AP)—The American military is shipping battlefield equipment through Jordan and Kuwait, testing possible exit routes in advance of a U.S. withdrawal in Iraq, military officials said.

The convoys—carrying armored vehicles, weapons and other items—mark the Pentagon's first steps in confronting the complex logistics of transporting the huge arsenal stockpiled in Iraq over nearly six years.

It's also part of a wider assessment, ordered by U.S. Central Command, to decide what items the military can transfer, donate, sell or toss away once a full-scale withdrawal is under way, Marine Corps and Army officials told The Associated Press.

"Because they are starting to see a potential reduction of forces, they are looking to get more stuff out," Terry Moores, the deputy assistant chief of staff for logistics for Marine Corps Central Command, said Saturday.

"We started slow," Moores said, but added "it's picked up speed" in recent months.

The Iraqi-U.S. security pact, which took effect Jan. 1, calls for American troops to withdraw from Iraq's cities by June 30 and completely pull out troops by 2012—a timeline that could speed up if President Barack Obama keeps to a campaign promise to have troops out of Iraq within 16 months of taking office.

In testimony before the U.S. House of Representative earlier this month, the independent Government Accountability Office said the Pentagon needed to redefine its withdrawal strategy, saying it did not take into account either the security pact deadline or Obama's possible accelerated timeframe.

A GRIM CLIMATE SCENARIO

'Mass migrations and war'

CAPE TOWN, South Africa (AP)—If we don't deal with climate change decisively, "what we're talking about then is extended world war," the eminent economist said.

His audience Saturday, small and elite, had been stranded here by bad weather and were talking climate. They couldn't do much about the one, but the other was squarely in their hands. And so, Lord Nicholas Stern was telling them, was the potential for mass migrations setting off mass conflict.

"Somehow we have to explain to people just how worrying that is," the British economic thinker said.

Stern, author of a major British government report detailing the cost of climate change, was one of a select group of two dozen—environment ministers, climate negotiators and experts from 16 nations—scheduled to fly to Antarctica to learn firsthand how global warming might melt its ice into the sea, raising ocean levels worldwide.

Their midnight flight was scrubbed on Friday and Saturday because of high winds on the southernmost continent, 3,000 miles from here. While waiting at their Cape Town hotel for the gusts to ease down south, chief sponsor Erik Solheim, Norway's environment minister, improvised with group exchanges over coffee and wine about the future of the planet.

"International diplomacy is all about personal relations," Solheim said. "The more people know each other, the less likely there will be misunderstandings."

Understandings will be vital in this "year of climate," as the world's nations and their negotiators count down toward a U.N. climate conference in Copenhagen in December, target date for concluding a grand new deal to replace the Kyoto Protocol - the 1997 agreement, expiring in 2012, to reduce carbon dioxide and other global-warming emissions by industrial nations.

Priest of lepers in Hawaii to become saint

VATICAN CITY (AP)—A 19th-century Belgian priest who ministered to leprosy patients in Hawaii, and died of the disease, will be declared a saint this year at a Vatican ceremony presided over by Pope Benedict XVI.

The Rev. Damien de Veuster's canonization date of Oct. 11 was set Saturday.

Born Joseph de Veuster in 1840, he took the name Damien and went to Hawaii in 1864 to join other missionaries of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. Nine years later, he began ministering to leprosy patients on the remote Kalaupapa peninsula of Molokai island, where some 8,000 people had been banished amid an epidemic in Hawaii in the 1850s.

AP

In this photo provided by Hawaii State Archive, Father Damien is seen in this portrait taken two months before his death in 1889 at the leprosy settlement in Kalaupapa, Hawaii.

The priest eventually contracted the disease, also known as Hansen's disease, and died in 1889 at age 49.

"He went there (to Hawaii) knowing that he could never return," The Rev. Alfred Bell, who spearheaded Damien's canonization cause, told Vatican Radio. "He suffered a lot, but he stayed."

De Veuster was beatified—a step toward sainthood—in 1995 by Pope John Paul II.

12 die in Slovakia train, bus collision

BRATISLAVA, Slovakia (AP)—A train collided with a bus in central Slovakia on Saturday, killing 12 people and injuring 21 others, officials said.

The collision occurred at about 9 a.m. (0800 GMT, 3 a.m. EST) Saturday at a train crossing near the town of Brezno, Health Ministry official Anton Pencer said. The victims were all passengers aboard the bus, which was carrying 35 people from the town of Banovce nad Bebravou to a nearby ski resort, he said.

Pencer said the injured were taken to nearby hospitals.

The cause of the crash was under investigation, police spokeswoman Maria Faltaniova told television news station TA3.

The two-carriage train with 15 people aboard derailed and two of its passengers sustained minor injuries, Health Ministry spokeswoman Zuzana Cizmarikova said.

Cizmarikova said the death toll was raised to 12 after rescue workers recovered one more body from the demolished bus later Saturday. She said six people were either in critical or very serious condition.

Health & Fitness

All together now: 30 minutes a day, five days a week

By HOWARD SCHNEIDER
(C) 2008, THE WASHINGTON POST

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Guests check out the new equipment during the opening of the Pilates Center at the Palms Resort Saipan. New federal guidelines state that 30 minutes a day, five days a week, at a moderate effort, is necessary for basic health; double that and/or make it more intense for more significant health and fitness benefits.

The federal government released a new set of exercise guidelines a couple of weeks ago, and the basic recommendation was straightforward: Thirty minutes a day, five days a week, at a moderate effort, for basic health; double that and/or make it more intense for more significant health and fitness benefits.

While the "2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans" from the Department of Health and Human Services are generally consistent with earlier recommendations, the attempt here was to provide the broadest possible review of the available science, and to create a document that would have the weight of federal policy.

"These guidelines provide muscle that was not available" in the discussion of where physical activity fits in an array of issues, according to William E. Kraus, a professor of medicine at Duke University's medical school and a member of the advisory panel that assembled the guidelines. "It becomes part of national policy. ... By doing such a broad review of the science, we feel very confident that HHS is armed with the best data to come up with broad recommendations."

It also takes a sometimes confusing subject and renders it in pretty simple terms.

The effect of a more intense workout, for example, was given a specific multiplier—namely, 2. So if you are willing to work out at a level where you are breathing so hard that conversation becomes difficult, you can cut the recommended times in half—to 15 minutes a day for general health, or 30 minutes a day for more substantial health and fitness improvements. (Don't try to start out at this level, by the way; work up to it.)

The concept of "accumulation" was endorsed, at least as a way to get started. If you have been inactive or have trouble finding a free half-hour, you can still benefit from multiple 10-minute chunks—a walk or calisthenics before work, a stroll at lunch and a final session at night, for example.

For the general adult population, there are more details and suggestions, and forms for tracking daily activity, at www.health.gov/PAguidelines/default.aspx.

The panel also singled out specific populations for which exercise might seem less important or be more likely to go overlooked. The overriding point was that the general recommendation of five-day-a-week aerobic training and at least biweekly strength training holds for nearly everyone, including senior citizens, women through pregnancy and the postpartum period, and people with chronic problems such as osteoarthritis that might make them overly cautious.

But there are a few specific recommendations and caveats:

■ If people over 65 can't meet the full recommendations, then even small efforts will, over time, improve strength, stamina and coordination. For those who have been inactive or feel at risk of falling, balance training three times a week is recommended, including exercises such as walking backward, heel-and-toe walking and disciplines like tai chi.

■ Pregnant women who have been exercising have no reason to stop, though those accustomed to particularly vigorous workouts may have to adjust intensity in consultation with their doctor. Those who have been inactive before becoming pregnant will benefit from moderate aerobic activity, with little or no risk. Some common-sense exceptions include potential-impact sports like horseback riding, skiing, soccer and basketball; also, after the first trimester pregnant women should avoid exercises that involve lying on the back.

■ People with disabilities from stroke, cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy or other conditions "should engage in regular activity according to their abilities and should avoid inactivity." Consult with a doctor or therapist about how to adapt exercises or activity to the particular condition.

■ For people with chronic illnesses—the report singles out osteoarthritis, Type 2 diabetes and cancer—regular physical activity can lessen the impact of the disease, improving longevity for some types of cancers, improving mobility and lessening pain for arthritis sufferers, and lowering the risk of heart and other problems associated with Type 2 diabetes.

■ Kids need to be moving at least an hour a day, in ways appropriate to their age. There needn't be so much structure, but there does need to be variety, with activities that are aerobic, build muscle, and help develop balance and coordination. Twenty push-ups, in other words, may be less important than climbing a tree or wrestling a sibling; a jog around the neighborhood may be fine for the parents, but let the kids stick to hopscotch or soccer.

Food poisoning strikes 1 in 4 Americans each year

ATLANTA (AP)—Next time you have a case of diarrhea that lasts a day or more, chances are better than 1 in 3 that it was food poisoning. As many as a quarter of Americans suffer a food-borne illness each year - though only a fraction of those cases get linked to high-profile outbreaks like the recent salmonella-peanut scare, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"Outbreaks are dramatic instances," says Dr. Robert Tauxe, a CDC expert on the subject. But they highlight a health threat that many people exaggerate and misunderstand, according to some experts.

Scientists have counted more than 250 food-related types of illness—from viruses to bacteria to parasites. Most common are Norwalk-like viruses—famous for sickening cruise-ship passengers. They account for about two-thirds of known food-poisoning cases, according to the CDC.

Two types of bacteria, campylobacter and salmonella, are the next most common. Campylobacter is blamed for about 14 percent of food poisonings, salmonella for roughly 10 percent.

The exact toll of these and other bugs is not really known.

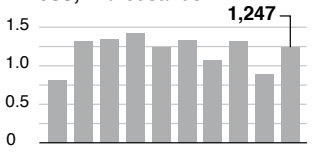
Ten years ago, a team of CDC scientists put together the best enduring estimate of how many Americans get food poisoning each year: 76 million illnesses, which resulted in 325,000 hospitalizations and 5,000 deaths.

No more recent figures are available. But the current numbers must be close to 87 million cases, 371,000 hospitalizations and 5,700 deaths, according to an Associated Press calculation that used the CDC formula and current population estimates.

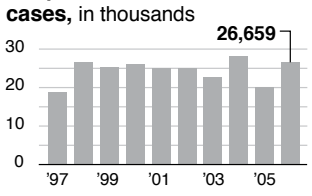
Food poisoning

The number of confirmed food poisonings has held steady in recent years. It's estimated that 87 million people get food poisoning each year.

Outbreaks of foodborne illness, in thousands



Suspected and confirmed cases, in thousands



NOTE: CDC officials believe many cases of foodborne illness are unreported each year

SOURCE: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention AP

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

NELLY DLC. BUMANGLAG, Plaintiff, vs. LINDA DLC. TOVES, CONSOLACION DLC. TOVES, ANA C. DELA CRUZ, ANTONIO C. DELA CRUZ, RAMON C. DELA CRUZ, JOSEPHINE P. DELA CRUZ, and the Estate of MANUEL T. DELA CRUZ, Deceased, Defendant.

CIVIL ACTION NO. 00-275

NOTICE OF SALE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, pursuan to a judgement issued by the Court in this matter on January 26, 2009, I will sell, at public auction, to the highest bidder, on the terms and conditions set forth hereinbelow, all of the right, title, and interest of Defendants the Estate of Manuel T. Dela Cruz in and to the following property: Tract No. 21729, situated in I-Denmi, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, containing an area of 46,660 square meters, more or less, as more particularly described on Drawing/Cadastral Plat No. 2038/72, registered with the Land Registry as Document No. 7912, dated January 23, 1979.

Date, Time, and Place of Sale. The sale will be held on Friday, March 6, 2009, at the hour of 1:30 p.m., at the Law Offices of Michael A. White, LLC, Joeten Center, Susupe, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands. The sale will be open to the general public.

Terms and Conditions of Sale. The Terms and Conditions of Sale may be obtained from the undersigned, either prior to or at the sale. These terms and conditions shall govern the conduct of the sale.

DATED, this 3rd day of February, 2009.

/s/ **MICHAEL A. WHITE**
Auctioneer

William M. Fitzgerald, Esq.
LAW OFFICES OF WILLIAM M. FITZGERALD
2nd Fl. Macaranas Bldg., Garapan Beach Road
P.O. Box 500909
Saipan, MP 96950
Telephone: (670) 234-7241
Fax: (670) 234-7530

Attorney for Petitioner

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

IN RE THE ESTATE OF SYLVERIA BENAVENTE MENDIOLA, Deceased.

CIVIL ACTION NO. 09-0046

NOTICE OF HEARING

The petition of Margarita M. Palacios, seeking to be appointed as Administratrix of the Estate of Sylveria Benavente Mendiola ("deceased"), has been set for hearing before the Commonwealth Superior Court, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, on **March 10, 2009, at 1:30 p.m.** Any person who has any objection to this petition may file his or her objection with the Commonwealth Superior Court at any time before the hearing, or may appear at the time set for hearing to present such objection or interest in the above-captioned matter.

DATED this _____ day of February, 2009.

/s/ Bernadita A. Sablan
Clerk of Court

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION, Plaintiff, vs. ANTONIA URUMELOG, Defendant.

CIVIL ACTION NO. 07-424

FIRST AMENDED NOTICE OF SALE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, pursuan to an Order issued by the Court in this matter on December 22, 2008, I will sell, at public auction, to the highest bidder, on the terms and conditions set forth hereinbelow, all of the right, title, and interest of Defendants in and to the following property: Lot 010 K 225, situated in Dandan, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, containing an area of 920 square meters more or less, as more particularly described on Drawing/Cadastral Plat No. 010 K 01 dated Augusts 19, 1987, Commonwealth Recorders's File No. 87-2909, the description therein being incorporated herein by reference.

Date, Time, and Place of Sale. The sale will be held on Friday, March 6, 2009, at the hour of 1:30 p.m., at the Law Offices of Michael A. White, LLC, Joeten Center, Susupe, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands. The sale will be open to the general public.

Terms and Conditions of Sale. The Terms and Conditions of Sale may be obtained from the undersigned, either prior to or at the sale. These terms and conditions shall govern the conduct of the sale.

DATED, this 2nd day of February, 2009.

/s/ **MICHAEL A. WHITE**
Auctioneer

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San Jose Village
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Telephone No.: (670) 234-7455/234-7427
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Facsimile No.: (670) 234-7256

Attorneys for Plaintiff Commonwealth Development Authority.

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

COMMONWEALTH DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY, Plaintiff, vs. DONALD G. FLORES, CECILIA U. FLORES, WILLIAM R. CONCEPCION, LILLIAN U. CONCEPCION, and ISLAND RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT, INC., Defendants.

Civil Action No. 98-506C

NOTICE OF AUCTION

The Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety, hereinafter referred to as auctioneer, and the Development Corporation Division of the Commonwealth Development Authority, hereinafter referred to as CDA, hereby give notice that all of the right, title, and interest of the Defendants Donald G. Flores, Cecilia U. Flores, William R. Concepcion, Lillian U. Concepcion and Island Resources Development, Inc, in the following described real property situated in Saipan, CNMI will be sold at an auction:

Lot H 468, 468A & Lot 439-7-2 (part of H-468, 468A & Lot 439)
Beginning at a corner which is designated as Corner No. 1, having plane rectangular coordinates of 47,004.35 meters North and 51,641.12 meters East of the Mariana Islands coordinate system of 1966.

Thence N 47° 24' 27" E, 56.10 meters to Corner 2;
Thence S 62° 33' 0" E, 103.62 meters to Corner 3;
Thence S 33° 30' 59" W, 70.82 meters to Corner 4;
Thence N 64° 05' 36" W, 116.68 meters to Corner 5;
Thence N 31° 09' 46" E, 20.88 meters to Corner 1, the point of beginning.

The above described property contains an area of 8,071 square meters, more or less, including all improvements, appurtenances and easements therewith.

The auction sale will be open to the general public and will be held at CDA's Conference Room, Saipan, at **2:00 p.m., on Friday, March 6, 2009,** subject to the following announced terms and conditions:

1. **Minimum Bid. No minimum opening bid.**
2. Reserve. The auction shall be held with reserve.
3. Rights and Duties of Auctioneer. Consistent with the custom and usage and applicable law of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands governing auctions with reserve, auctioneer shall have the following rights and duties in conducting the auction:
   a.) To withdraw the property listed for sale in this announcement before sale or before a bid for such property is accepted;
   b.) To adjourn the sale without notice at any time before any specific property is struck off, without incurring any liability whatsoever thereby; and
   c.) To reject, on behalf of the seller, any and all bids.
4. Bids. Tentative bids may be submitted in advance for any and all of the property listed in this notice. Such bids shall not be binding, except that the highest of such bids will automatically be considered the opening bid for the item. Bids may be entered in person, in writing, or by telephone to Oscar C. Camacho, Officer-In-Charge, Commonwealth Development Authority, P.O. Box 502149, Saipan, MP 96950, Phone: 234-7145, Fax: 235-7147; or to F. Matthew Smith, P.O. Box 501127, Saipan, MP 96950, Phone: 234-7455, Fax: 234-7256.
5. Deposit; Payment. A deposit of ten percent (10%) of the purchase price must be paid on the day of the auction sale. The remaining balance will be due within ten (10) days of the auction sale. All payments must be made by cash, cashier's check or credit card. Failure to make payment of the remaining balance within ten (10) days will result in forfeiture by the buyer of the ten percent (10%) deposit, and any and all of the buyer's rights, title and interest in any of the aforementioned property will revert to CDA.
6. Change of Terms. Auctioneer and CDA reserve the right to change any of the terms of conduct and enforcement of sale by announcement, written or oral, made before the auction or at the commencement thereof, and such change or changes, by virtue of this clause, shall be binding on any buyer by constructive notice.
7. **Inspection and No Warranty. Bidders are cautioned to inspect the title and property; contact CDA for scheduled viewing and inspection times. The interests of Donald G. Flores, Cecilia U. Flores, William R. Concepcion, Lillian U. Concepcion and Island Resources Development, Inc., in the property are being sold "AS IS" and without warranty, and subject to the redemption laws of the CNMI. Failure to inspect the real property will not constitute a ground for any claim, adjustment or rescission by any buyer.**

Dated this 4th day of February 2009.

/s/ SANTIAGO F. TUDELA, Commissioner
Department of Public Safety

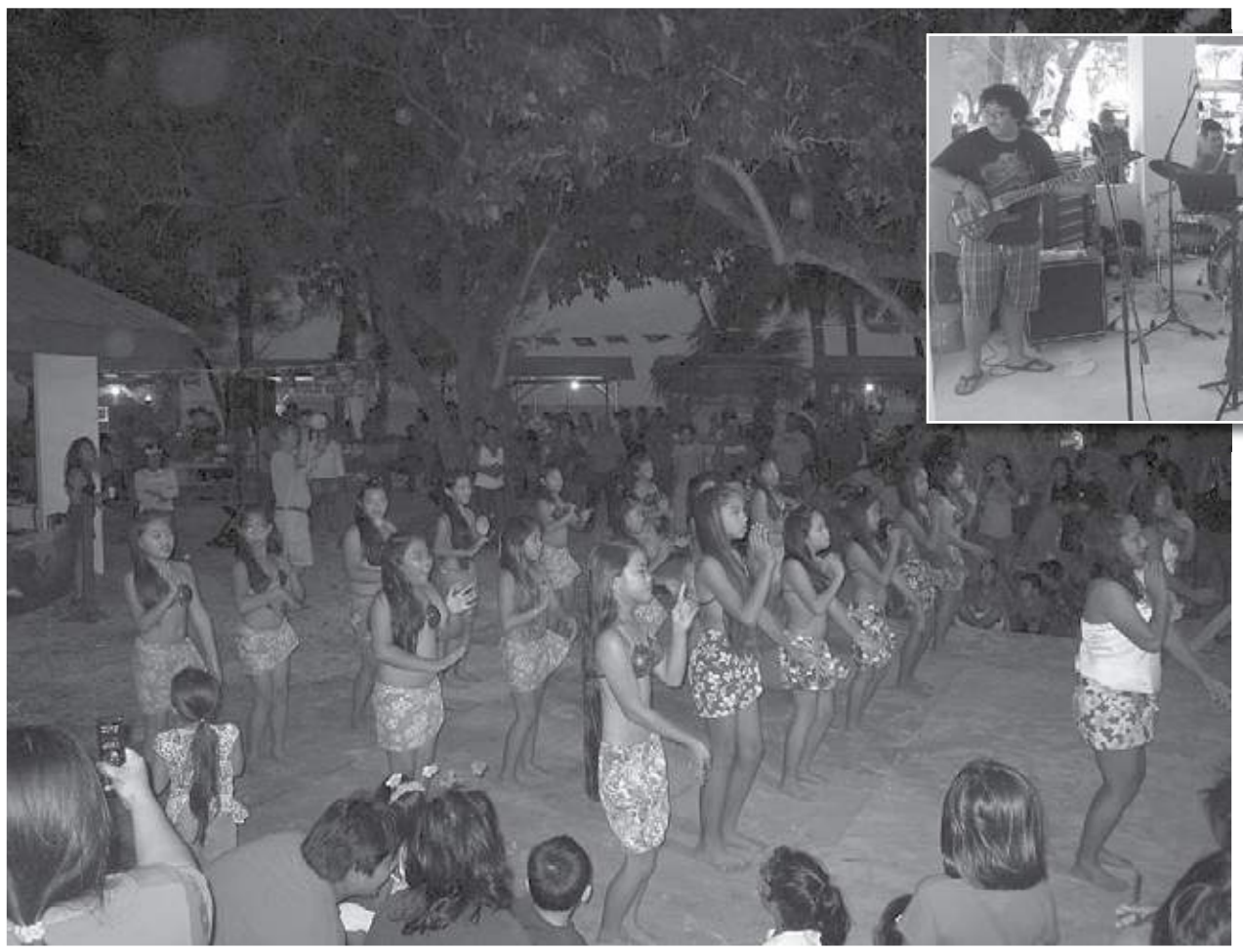
Life & Style

Tinian Hot Pepper Festival holds heat, humor, hospitality

The island community of Tinian offered a delightful weekend of heat, humor, and hospitality at the Tinian Hot Pepper Festival, as both island residents and visitors got into the spirit of the festivities on Feb. 14-15, 2009.

The island trademark *donni sali* (Chamorro for the indigenous hot pepper of Tinian) took center stage throughout the weekend, selling by the bottle and being featured in favorite island dishes like chicken *kelaguen* (chopped chicken, grated coconut, *donni sali* and other seasoning wrapped in a fresh tortilla) and barbecue lunch with mouth-watering *finadenni* dipping sauce (soy sauce with a generous squirt of lemon juice and sensible dap of *donni sali*). Bragging rights for the best *estafao pika* (a juicy chicken appetizer laced with *donni sali*) went to Tinian mother-of-three Vanessa Aldan.

A number of hardened islanders and innocent visitors tried their luck at the *donni sali* eating contest. While Tinian's own Napu K.Aldan and Sylvia Biz walked away with cash prizes and the well-earned titles of "hottest" festival male and female, each of the participants gained respect for their courage to even participate.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Young dancers perform at the festival.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

A contemporary band performs at the main stage.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Dragon boat race.

While the *donni sali* eating competition caused considerable excitement and elevated heart rates for both participants and spectators, things were quite slower but no less exciting during the annual *umang* (Chamorro for hermit crab) races. Children ages four to 12 lined up their beach-dwelling, arthropod contenders to compete.

"The speed of the *umang* depends on their mood," observed one Tinian native. "The fastest *umang* can finish the race in less than a minute."

"But sometimes they may just refuse to come out of their shell, much to the embarrassment of their owner," she added with a chuckle.

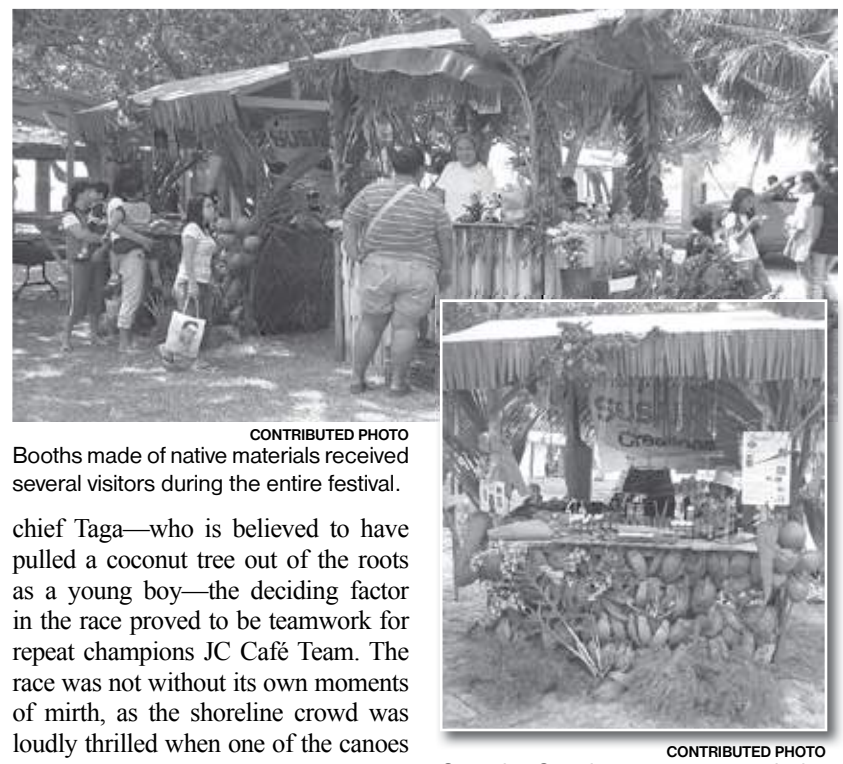
One visiting couple waiting all day to witness the race and said they were not disappointed. Neither was 4-year-old Alex Rankin of the U.S., whose *umang* finished the race first.

Intergenerational, homegrown stage entertainment was provided during the festival by *I Man Natibo Trio* (Three Native) singers, 1980s recording artist Ben Muna, Project Impact Hip Hop Dancers, 4Play band, and Tinian Elementary School My WAVE (Welcome All Visitors Enthusiastically) dancers. From Saipan, Hapi the Clown mesmerized the children and singer Maggie Naputi lured Cha Cha fans out of their seats, including cha-cha contest winners James M. San Nicholas and Sonia Taitano. Fourteen-year-old Chloe Hofschneider also wowed the crowd in garnering the top spot in the karaoke contest.

A professional TV filming crew from Asahi News Star was on hand filming the festival for an upcoming 20th Anniversary Special program targeting the show's 4.5 million viewers in Tokyo. Famed Japanese movie director Eiji Uchida headed up the shooting series on Tinian.

"The people are very friendly here, and I feel welcomed," said Miho Harada, the producer of the news program. "What a lovely island, and such a natural wonder of trees and color!"

The weekend's activities at Tachogna Beach also featured a beach volleyball competition, won by the young Team Donne of Tinian Junior/High School. In a nod to the island's multi-cultural population, there was also a dragon boat race. While some contestants claimed the strength of the legendary Chamorro chief Taga—who is believed to have pulled a coconut tree out of the roots as a young boy—the deciding factor in the race proved to be teamwork for repeat champions JC Café Team. The race was not without its own moments of mirth, as the shoreline crowd was loudly thrilled when one of the canoes went off-course quite a distance before realizing their mistake.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Booths made of native materials received several visitors during the entire festival.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Susan's Creations was one of the booths selling donni sali at the Tinian Hot Pepper Festival.

"Once again, the Tinian community has reminded us all of what good island living is all about—working together, sharing, and enjoying the company of friends and the simple pleasures of life," said Marianas Visitors Authority managing director Perry Tenorio. "The celebration was a success, and we're looking to more visitors at next year's festival."

Visitors to Tinian can also explore white sand beaches, stunning cliff lines, ancient Chamorro limestone pillars called Taga stones, relics from the Japanese administration of the islands, and WWII ruins. World class gaming is also available at the Tinian Dynasty Hotel and Casino.

The Tinian Hot Pepper Festival is an annual signature event of MVA and the Tinian community. MVA thanked the Tinian Mayor's Office, Tinian Dynasty Hotel & Casino, Hafa Adai Scooter Rental, Huang Shun Corp., JC Café, DLC Entertainment, and the Department of Public Safety for their support.

Tinian is accessible within minutes of the main island of Saipan via airplane or ferry, or via connecting flights from Rota and Guam. ***(MVA)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Hot Pepper Eating Contest.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Donni sali products are on display during the entire run of the festival.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The beach volleyball competition.

Saint Laurent art auction 'sale of the century'

By JENNY BARCHFIELD
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

PARIS (AP)—From the Picassos that graced his walls to historic artifacts and hundreds of sculptures, the artwork that inspired late fashion designer Yves Saint Laurent went on display Saturday, three days before it is auctioned.

AP

A tapestry by Sir Edward Coley Burne-Jones which is part of the Yves Saint Laurent, Pierre Berge art collection, is seen Saturday Feb. 21, 2009 at the Grand Palais in Paris.

Billed as "the sale of the century," the auction of the 733-piece collection will disperse in three days a collection that took Saint Laurent and his partner Pierre Berge half a century to amass.

Highlights include Piet Mondrian's 1922 painting "Composition in Blue, Red, Yellow and Black," whose squares of saturated colors inspired Saint Laurent's legendary 1965 shift dress; a wooden sculpture by Romanian Constantin Brancusi that is expected to sell for euro15 million-euro20 million ($19 million-$25 million); and a pair of bronze animal heads that disappeared from a Beijing palace in 1860 and that China now wants removed from the auction and returned.

The lot that's expected to fetch the highest price is a 1914-1915 Picasso painting of a guitar, "Instruments de musique sur un gueridon," (Musical Instruments on a Table) from the Spanish artist's cubist period. The canvas features angular splotches of red, greens and mustard yellow against a somber gray background and is the last large-format painting from the period still in private hands, auction house Christie's said.

The Picasso is estimated at euro25 million-euro30 million ($32 million-$38 million).

Other lots include sculptures from ancient Egypt and Rome and 17th century Italy, ivory crucifixes and silver German beer steins that covered every available surface of Saint Laurent's homes, as well as his Art Deco furniture and even his bed.

The sale is expected to gross euro200 million-euro300 million ($250 million-$380 million). A large portion of the proceeds is to go to a foundation to support AIDS research.

Saint Laurent died in June at age 71 after a yearlong battle with brain cancer.

"In 30 years in the auction business, I've never seen anything as good as this," said Jonathan Rendell, vice president of Christie's America. Saint Laurent and Berge "collected at the very top of every area that they bought in, the very best Modernist pictures, the very best collection of Art Deco that I've ever seen come to sale, the German silver, the cameos."

"It's really glamorous ... real luxury. The way they lived was extraordinary," Rendell said.

A pre-auction exhibition at the Grand Palais divides the pieces according to theme, although in their homes, Berge and Saint Laurent mixed it up, placing a Picasso cubist painting above a delicate portrait by French neoclassical painter Ingres and covering Art Deco side tables with sculptures, intricate serving bowls and elaborate silver cups made between the 1st and 20th centuries.

Snakes fascinated Saint Laurent and they adorn all sorts or items, slithering up a brass lamp, curled around a vase or embellishing the armrests on a chair by furniture designer Eileen Gray.

Controversy continued to swirl around the two Chinese bronzes—the heads of a rabbit and a rat—which Chinese officials want returned.

A Chinese-backed group on Friday asked a Paris judge to suspend the sale of the relics, which disappeared from a palace on the outskirts of Beijing in 1860 when French and British forces sacked it at the close of the second Opium War, according to China's official Xinhua News Agency.

The judge is expected to rule on the request on Monday morning.

"We respect the feelings of the Chinese people. We understand their position. Under international law, there is no reason why this auction shouldn't go ahead," said Rendell.

The exhibition is free and open to the public through Monday afternoon—hours before the start of sale, which will be held in six sessions over three days because of the sheer size of the collection. Hundreds of private collectors and museums from around the world are expected to bid.

On Saturday morning, art lovers braved gray skies to line up outside the glass-and-steel Grand Palais for what for most would be their first—and last—look at the collection.

Saint Laurent and Berge started collecting art in the 1950s, when the designer catapulted to fame at the Paris fashion house Christian Dior. As their fortunes grew with the launch of Yves Saint Laurent's own line, they continued to collect, working largely with private dealers and buying what caught their eye.

Some of the pieces eventually found their way onto the catwalk as the inspiration for Saint Laurent's collections. Rhododendron-shaped leaf appliques on a flowing evening gown from the designer's winter 1980 collection paid homage to the work of Matisse, whose 1937-1938 collage "Le Danseur" is expected to sell for euro4 million-euro6 million ($5 million-$7.5 million) at the sale.

The white doves on a bustier from 1988 recall the marble, bird-shaped chairs by French artist Francois-Xavier Lalanne, which are estimated at euro20,000-euro30,000 ($25,000-$38,000).

One of the most influential and enduring designers of the 20th century, Saint Laurent is credited with helping empower women by reinventing pants as a sleek, elegant staple of the female wardrobe. He is also remembered for his ladies' tuxedo, see-through blouses, safari jackets and glamorous gowns that remain stylish decades after they hit the catwalks.

Luxury company the Gucci Group acquired the Yves Saint Laurent brand in 1999.

Berge has said he made the decision to sell the collection after Saint Laurent's death because without him, "it has lost the greater part of its significance."

The auction comes at a difficult time for the art world, with the global financial crisis making buyers wary. Christie's, which has announced it is cutting 300 jobs, is betting on the sale to help reverse its flagging fortunes.

Message of Appreciation

Teresita Blas Diaz

September 03, 1940 - January 31, 2009

Words cannot express our true feeling of appreciation to all who have reached out to us in any way. Your presence and prayers at the daily Eucharistic Celebration and rosary have comforted us as we mourn the loss of our beloved mother and grandmother. We will keep you in our hearts, thoughts, and most especially our prayers, and may God bless us all.

To all our family and friends who unselfishly offered their assistance, condolences and prayers, we are deeply touched.

Thank you, Si Yu'us Ma'ase

From the Family

IN LOVING MEMORY OF

Maria Gina H. Santos

October 22, 1957 - February 16, 2009

Her memory will live forever in the hearts of her:

Children: Christine H. Santos & Giancarlo Pierre Evangelista
Liza H. Santos
Husband: Vicente Mafnas Santos
Brothers & Sisters In-law: Patricia, Roque, Jesus, Remedio, Barbara, John, Ramon, Norman & Families

In her new life, she now joins her:

Father: Cris Ayran H.
Brother: Efren Mascardo
Sisters: Hermie & Edith
Grandmother: Caridad N. Mascardo
Mother In-law: Isabel Mafnas Santos
Brother In-law: Alvin M. Santos
Grandparents In-law: Ignacia Aguon & Enrique Agulto Santos

She will be greatly missed by her mother Rosalina and brother John, the Mafnas & Evangelista-Indalecio families, and numerous nieces, nephews, cousins, relatives and friends in the U.S., Philippines, Spain & Guam.

Nightly rosary is being said at Kristo Rai at 7:30 p.m. On Tuesday, February 24, 2009, her remains will be escorted from Nuestra Señora dela Paz to Kristo Rai at 10:00 a.m. for viewing followed by lunch. Mass will be at 1:00 p.m. followed by the burial at Sanctuario Pax in Kagman.

Thank You.

From the Family

Oscar is in the house: Trophies come to the Kodak

LOS ANGELES (AP)—A group of security workers stand at attention as two black SUVs, each driven by armed guards, pull up to the artists' entrance to the Kodak Theatre. Inside are the Academy Awards' most famous guests.

Men in black suits open the car doors. There sit 10 cardboard boxes carrying the show's critical stars: Oscar No. 3453 and 51 of his fellow Oscar statuettes. Steve Miessner, the Keeper of the Oscars, rides along with them.

He and the security guards load the boxes onto two dollies, and each is sent up a backstage freight elevator accompanied by an armed guard.

Miessner leads them down a winding hallway and into an office in the bowels of the Kodak. Two guards stand at the door as he dons his trademark white gloves and begins unpacking the precious cargo: 50 foam containers, each with one Oscar inside.

No. 3453 is among the first he unpacks. Miessner examines it and notices a bit of packaging glue stuck to the statue. He pulls a blue velvet cloth from his toolbox, which also includes tiny wrenches and a pen light, and gently polishes.

One by one, Miessner opens the foam containers and places the golden men on a desk.

"I usually set them all out and put little medallions on them, because backstage you can't see the serial numbers," he says.

Miessner, 47, officially works as an assistant to the film academy president and executive director. But he's also the only academy person who handles the Oscar trophies.

AP
Steve Miessner, the keeper of the Oscars, puts a numbered tag around a statue at Kodak Theatre in Los Angeles, Saturday, Feb. 21, 2009 in preparation for the 81st Academy Awards on Sunday.

He's responsible for tracking all 52 statuettes reserved for Sunday's ceremony. He'll stand backstage as the awards are presented, noting the serial number of each Oscar and its recipient. After the show, he'll log the information into the academy's Statuettes Database.

But today he's making sure each trophy is accounted for and camera ready. He writes "3453" on a white paper tag and ties it with string around the Oscar's neck, like a little pendant. Miessner, who has served as Keeper of the Oscars for five years, says some nights he wakes in a panic, dreaming that an Oscar sent onstage during the show was still wearing it's numbered necklace.

"In the back of my mind I start to have all these fantasies about what could be going wrong," he says, noting that an entire shipment of Oscars was stolen - and eventually recovered - in 2002. (Hence all the armed guards.)

Just knowing the Oscars are safely at the Kodak brings Miessner some relief.

"They're here. I know they're protected," he says. "They're stationary. They're not going anywhere."

Until Sunday, when No. 3453 and his brothers will be sent off to their new homes.

Oscar countdown: Driver, step on the battery

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Limos are out, hybrids are in. The Los Angeles Police Department shows off a pair of bomb-sniffing dogs along with some high-tech gear being used to keep security tight.

Also, a million-dollar shoe designer tones it down, and celebrities collect some swag while raising awareness of the arts.

■■■

SUNDAY DRIVER: Meryl Streep will be going green—literally—to the Oscars.

The best actress nominee is expected to be chauffeured to Sunday's ceremony in a silver 2010 Toyota Prius, according to the Environmental Media Association. The new hybrid model won't launch until later this spring, making the "Doubt" actress the first woman in America to take a ride in the new energy efficient vehicle.

■■■

TIGHT SECURITY: With eyes in the sky and noses on the ground, Los Angeles police say they're ready to keep Sunday's Academy Awards ceremony safe.

Police Chief William Bratton told reporters Friday that national and city law enforcement officials didn't know of any credible threats aimed at the ceremony. But to make sure it stays that way, officers are deploying some high-tech crime-fighters.

And Aya and Rex, a pair of bomb-sniffing dogs.

The German Shepherds sat patiently as police officials described LA Shield, a helicopter-mounted device that helps officers better coordinate ground and air patrols units near key locations, such as the Kodak Theater where the Oscars are handed out.

Security at the awards show is always tight, with the city closing streets and a subway stop. Academy officials are also working to ensure no ticket-crashers gain entry to the show.

This year police will also deploy a high-tech imaging system that can spot terrorists wearing suicide bomb vests or plastic explosives that might slip through a metal detector.

Leaving nothing to chance, Aya and Rex will also walk a beat on Sunday.

■■■

TO BLING OR NOT TO BLING: Because of the not-so-glitzy economy, shoe designer Stuart Weitzman decided to forego his annual tradition of sending a one-of-a-kind pair of heels decked out with $1 million worth of gems down the red carpet on an up-and-comer's feet. Weitzman said such an extravagant display would not be appropriate this year.

"There are things that are right, and there are things that are not right. This year, we have chocolate shoes," Weitzman said pointing to a table of candy replicas at his suite at The London West Hollywood, where stylists were stopping by Thursday and Friday to pick up shoes for celebrity clients.

"You know how the old saying in retail goes: 'Sometimes you have to eat your inventory,'" he said.

Last year, the fancy-footwear designer chose "Juno" screenwriter Diablo Cody to wear specially designed $1 million diamond-encrusted shoes to the ceremony, but Cody caused furor, calling the selection "a cheesy publicity stunt." She opted to wear a pair of simple gold flats under her flowing Dior leopard print dress instead.

Weitzman hopes his "big fan" Angelina Jolie, the best actress Oscar nominee who previously donned nude Weitzman heels to the Screen Actors Guild Awards and the Golden Globes, will again wear a pair of his shoes Sunday.

■■■

SWAG TIME: Oscar time is swag time in Hollywood, and gift suites in Beverly Hills were bustling Friday.

The Haven suite, held at a private hillside home with views of downtown L.A., offered couture gowns, anti-cellulite treatments, fancy handbags, eyelash extensions and vacuum cleaners—all while raising awareness for the arts.

Stars who visited the suite were invited to record public service announcements for the Creative Coalition in support of federal funding for the arts.

'Wrestler' wins top indie honors at Spirit Awards

SANTA MONICA, Calif. (AP)—The sports comeback tale "The Wrestler" was picked as best picture Saturday at the Spirit Awards honoring independent film and won two other prizes, including best actor for Mickey Rourke.

A tuneup for the Academy Awards on Sunday, the Spirit Awards featured several winners also up for Oscars, including three of the four acting choices—Rourke, best-actress recipient Melissa Leo for "Frozen River" and supporting-actress pick Penelope Cruz for "Vicky Cristina Barcelona."

Rourke gave a prolonged, hilarious, expletive-laden acceptance speech, dedicating the award to Loki, his beloved Chihuahua that died six days earlier, and thanking everyone from his director, Darren Aronofsky, to the wrestling community. He mentioned that he had just talked with the Santa Monica police department, which "gave me a bed to sleep in 10 years ago," when Rourke was in the midst of the bad-boy behavior that made him a Hollywood has-been until his comeback in recent years with films such as "Sin City" and "The Wrestler."

The film stars Rourke as a washed-up former star with a last shot at glory in the ring. It also took the cinematography award for Maryse Alberti. The crowd gave Rourke a standing ovation and he received hugs and backslaps from audience members as he headed to the stage.

"I didn't realize how many closet Mickey Rourke fans there were," Aronofsky said backstage. "That's been the biggest surprise of the whole trip."

Momentarily forgetting co-star Marisa Tomei's name, Rourke later complimented her for her role as a stripper in "The Wrestler," which earned her a supporting-actress Oscar nomination.

"Not many girls can climb the pole," Rourke said. "She climbed the pole, and she did it well."

Right after Rourke's speech, Tom McCarthy won the best-director award for the immigrant drama "The Visitor."

"I feel like we should just stop the show after Mickey, because who could follow that, really?" McCarthy said.

Leo gave a whoop as she took the stage to collect her prize for "Frozen River," which got its start a year ago at the Sundance Film Festival, where it won the top dramatic honor. She stars as a destitute mother who stumbles into the immigrant-smuggling business with a Mohawk Indian woman along the U.S.-Canada border.

"You are my people. You know you are my people," Leo told the independent-cinema crowd at the awards luncheon in a tent along the Santa Monica beach. "'Frozen River' is a truly independent film."

The supporting honors went to Cruz as a combustible artist in a three-way relationship with her ex-husband and an American woman in Woody Allen's "Vicky Cristina Barcelona" and James Franco as a lover of slain gay-rights pioneer Harvey Milk in Gus Van Sant's "Milk."

Allen won the screenplay honor for "Vicky Cristina Barcelona," his romance that follows the affairs of two American women in Spain.

Cruz thanked Allen "just for letting me be around him. ... He's really the symbol of independence in our industry."

True to his neurotic nature, Allen abruptly departed the set on a pivotal day, when Cruz was to shoot a steamy kissing scene with Scarlett Johansson, Cruz said. Allen had found a freckle on his hand and wanted a dermatologist to examine it, she said.

"He just left, and I love him for that," Cruz said.

Franco said he was a longtime fan of Van Sant's films and signed on because of the talent involved with "Milk."

"When I heard this thing was happening with probably my favorite actor, Sean Penn, and it was such an important story, that was enough for me," said Franco, who added thanks to "everyone that was part of Harvey's life."

"Milk" also received the award for best first screenplay for Dustin Lance Black. The best first feature prize went to "Synecdoche, New York," the directing debut of Charlie Kaufman, who won a screenwriting Oscar for "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind."

"Synecdoche," a sprawling story of a theater director's attempt to re-create New York City on massive stages, also received the Robert Altman Award, given to a film's director, casting director and ensemble cast for following in the spirit of the late maverick filmmaker.

The documentary winner was James Marsh's "Man on Wire," about tightrope walker Philippe Petit and his 1974 mission to walk a rope between the World Trade Center towers. "Man on Wire" is favored to win the documentary Oscar, as well.

Another Oscar contender, the French school drama "The Class," took the foreign film honor.

Presented by the cinema group Film Independent, the Spirit Awards honor movies that cost less than $20 million to make, with a significant part of their budget originating from outside the Hollywood studio system. Other criteria for nominations include films' originality and provocative subject matter.

Rihanna won't discuss Chris Brown

LOS ANGELES (AP)—As police probe whether one of their own leaked a picture of a bruised and beaten woman that appears to be Rihanna, the image is sparking a discussion of the impact it could have on the issue of domestic violence. The celebrity Web site TMZ, which posted the photo Thursday night, did not explain its origin. The site wrote only that it was taken after an altercation between platinum-selling singer and her boyfriend, fellow pop star Chris Brown.

Los Angeles Police Chief William Bratton acknowledged Friday afternoon that the photo could prove embarrassing to the woman pictured, a view shared by some advocates for abused women. But in the welts and marks on the face of the woman in the photo, some also saw a teaching moment.

"If it could happen to Rihanna, it could happen to anyone," said Kim Gandy, president of the National Organization for Women. There are an estimated 4.8 million domestic violence attacks on women and another 2.9 million attacks on men each year, according to the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control.

"Maybe it is a good idea if it's her, if young girls see this," said Susan Murphy-Milano, a Chicago author and advocate for battered women. She said she hopes it makes them think, "Is the next picture going to be of her in a morgue?"

Both women expected the image, which even Bratton wouldn't go so far as to confirm was Rihanna, could spark a new awareness about domestic violence.

"The reality that domestic violence can happen to anyone, even someone with fame and celebrity, ought to bring home the point that this is a problem for our entire society," Gandy said. "We can't avoid or ignore it."

Bratton told reporters that along with launching an internal investigation into whether the photo is police evidence, he is also looking into how TMZ obtained the picture. He said the department may pursue a felony conspiracy case against TMZ and whomever might have helped them get the image.

Bratton said he suspected someone within the department leaked the photo, but did not elaborate or go so far as to confirm that it came from police evidence files.

"We are not treating this lightly," Bratton said. "It's an embarrassment to this department if in fact evidence was leaked.

"It's going to be a very painful experience for any personnel from this department and possibly those who they may have engaged in a conspiracy with to violate the laws of California."

TMZ did not say how it obtained the image and a publicist for the site did not return a phone or e-mail message seeking comment Friday.

Brown, 19, was arrested Feb. 8 on suspicion of making felony criminal threats, but police have not publicly identified his alleged victim. The woman was Rihanna, according to a person familiar with the situation, who was not authorized to speak publicly on the matter and requested anonymity.

A spokesman for Brown said the singer had no further comment beyond a statement released Sunday in which he said he was "sorry and saddened" about the incident. His attorney has not returned calls seeking comment.

Rihanna broke her silence on Friday, her 21st birthday, by releasing a statement through Rubenstein Associates.

"At the request of the authorities, Rihanna is not commenting about the incident involving Chris Brown," the statement read. "She wants to assure her fans that she remains strong, is doing well, and deeply appreciates the outpouring of support she has received during this difficult time."

Hilton, Myers top Razzies as year's worst

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Mike Myers' "The Love Guru" has found some disciples among Razzies voters who pick Hollywood's lowest achievements.

And Paris Hilton is getting her own Razzies moment with three awards all on her own at a ceremony that spoofs the Academy Awards on the eve of the Oscars.

"The Love Guru" won three Razzies on Saturday for worst picture, actor (Myers in the title role) and screenplay, which Myers co-wrote. Hilton's three prizes are worst actress for "The Hottie and the Nottie," supporting actress for "Repo! The Genetic Opera" and screen couple alongside either of her "Hottie" co-stars, Christine Lakin or Joel David Moore.

With three Razzies, Hilton tied the record set last year by Eddie Murphy, who won worst actor, supporting actor and supporting actress for his multiple roles in "Norbit."

Pierce Brosnan was chosen as worst supporting actor for "Mamma Mia!" The worst-director Razzie went to Uwe Boll for three movies: "In the Name of the King: A Dungeon Siege Tale," "1968: Tunnel Rats" and "Postal."

Razzies voters also gave a prize for worst career achievement to Boll, whose critically drubbed movies include "Bloodrayne" and its sequel.

"Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull" was named worst prequel, remake, rip-off or sequel.

John Wilson, founder of the Razzies, said Boll and Hilton's movies are so bad, he could envision a collaboration between the two.

"She is the 21st century Zsa Zsa Gabor. She is famous for who she hangs out with. She's not famous for any talent she has yet exhibited," Wilson said. "She may end up working with Uwe Boll. She could be the head vampire in `Bloodrayne 3.'"

"The Love Guru" features Myers as the world's second-best self-help guru, who must come to love himself before he can fully realize his potential. The movie topped out at $32 million at the domestic box office, chump change compared to the haul of Myers' "Austin Powers" sequels.

Wilson disagreed with other Razzies voters on "The Love Guru," saying that after watching it again to pull clips for the group's awards ceremony Saturday night, he did not think it was the year's worst movie.

"A couple of things he did got me to laugh, and these days, two laughs in a comedy is a high ratio," Wilson said.

In "The Hottie and the Nottie," Hilton plays a babe who won't date until her homely best pal lands a man. Hilton has a small role in "Repo," a horror musical about organ recipients who face a visit from the repo man if they fall behind on the payments.

Cancer-stricken star 'unwell' ahead of marriage

LONDON (AP)—A dying British reality television star was feeling unwell from "overdoing it" the day before her televised wedding, her publicist said Saturday, and it was not clear whether she would be well enough to continue with a ceremony that has gripped the country.

AP

Cancer-stricken reality TV star Jade Goody and her fiance Jack Tweed, right, share a kiss on the drive way of her home in Upshire, southern England Saturday Feb. 21, 2009.

Jade Goody went from being the poster child for British boorishness to an exemplar of bravery after her cancer diagnosis.

"Hopefully she'll be okay in the morning," publicist Max Clifford said. "She's possibly done too much today."

Goody is preparing for a celebrity wedding, but it's far from a typical celebrity marriage. The bride, 27, is bald from chemotherapy. The groom, 21-year-old Jack Tweed, is out on probation after assaulting a teenage boy with a golf club. She'll have a pouch concealed under her designer dress for the painkillers. He'll be wearing an electronic monitoring tag.

The brash Goody was plucked from obscurity to play in "Big Brother," a British reality television show. Her eye-popping gaffes - she infamously complained of being "an escape goat" and questioned whether English was spoken in the U.S. - quickly made her a target for ridicule.

Goody cashed in on her notoriety with an autobiography, fitness videos and a perfume line, but allegations of racism during a subsequent television appearance further clouded her reputation.

Goody's image began to turn around when she was diagnosed with cancer during the filming of a reality television episode in India last year.

Her decision to film her struggle with the disease, and make as much money from the process as possible for the benefit of her two sons, has drawn praise from all corners of British society, including the once-hostile press.

British Prime Minister Gordon Brown said Wednesday that Goody's story was tragic. The head of the Catholic Church in England and Wales, Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, said Goody was "a brave woman."

"A lot of people might say, 'Well, it's better if she did everything in quiet,'" Murphy-O'Connor told Sky News television in comments due to be broadcast Sunday. "But I think she's made a decision that she wants the last months of her life to teach people something."

Books make shorter work of long hours in hospital

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby

DEAR ABBY: My father recently began treatment for cancer. He has radiation daily and chemo once a week. Mom and Dad spend many hours sitting in the hospital for these treatments.

Several families from church have asked what they can do to make my parents' lives easier at this time. I have asked that instead of offering to make meals (Mom and Dad are both on restricted diets), donating puzzle books, meditation books and crossword puzzles to be enjoyed at the hospital would be a better idea.

I also plan to assemble some "boredom-buster bags" for my parents each week, so they won't get antsy waiting around for the procedures to be finished.

TRISHA IN MOORESVILLE, IND.

DEAR TRISHA: That's a terrific idea. However, if the church members would like to become more involved, ask them to consider saving their fashion, sports and political magazines and deliver them on a regular basis to the chemotherapy center. That way they will not only help your parents, but also other patients who are undergoing treatment there. I'm sure the donations would be greatly appreciated.

■■■

DEAR ABBY: I recently graduated from college, but aside from that, I can't seem to finish anything I start. I am a creative and talented designer, but because I no longer have deadlines, I don't see any of my projects through to completion.

I have tried giving myself personal deadlines to no avail, because I know there will be no consequences. Then I become angry and frustrated with myself, and the piles of uncompleted work get larger and larger. It seems like I am easily bored or stressed—that's when I stop working. I long for a sense of accomplishment and pride in my abilities. Could I have a disorder?

NEEDS HELP FINISHING TH ...

DEAR NEEDS HELP: Not unless being disorganized and not a self-starter is a disorder. Your inability to abide by personal deadlines will have serious "consequences" if you plan to have a career in design, because if you can't complete a project, you will have nothing to show potential clients. If you have nothing to show, you reduce the chances of being hired. So stop the self-indulgence and get moving!

■■■

DEAR ABBY: A few years ago, my husband and I had beautiful wood floors installed in our home. My problem is my two sons, ages 20 and 21, who constantly track dirt through the house. I have asked many times that they please wipe their feet or remove their shoes. They do it only if I am in the living room and can see them when they walk in.

I would like to tack a sign on the front door that says, "Wipe your feet or remove your shoes before entering." My husband thinks it would be rude, but he's not the one who has to constantly clean the floor.

Would it be rude to put up a sign? Or must I just continue to sweep and mop daily?

TIRED OF MOPPING IN DENHAM SPRINGS, LA.

DEAR TIRED OF MOPPING: If your sons are the only offenders, hanging a sign should not be necessary. In your absence your husband should enforce the rules. And if he, doesn't, then HE should do the mopping.

■■■

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

■■■

Abby shares more than 100 of her favorite recipes in two booklets: "Abby's Favorite Recipes" and "More Favorite Recipes by Dear Abby." Send a business-size, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for $12 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby—Cookbooklet Set, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

HERE WE ARE, POISED ON THE PRECIPICE OF "SUICIDE SLOPE." BELOW US LIE THE SKELETAL REMAINS OF HUNDREDS OF LITTLE SLED RIDERS.
SEARCHING FOR THAT ULTIMATE ADRENALINE RUSH, WE PREPARE TO HURL OURSELVES OVER THE BRINK! WHAT FATE AWAITS US?
READY?
NO.
LIFE AND DEATH HANG IN THE BALANCE! A FRACTION OF A SECOND AND ONE WRONG TURN ARE ALL THAT SEPARATE THEM!
THIS ISN'T HELPING.
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2/23

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

ICE CREAM TRUCK
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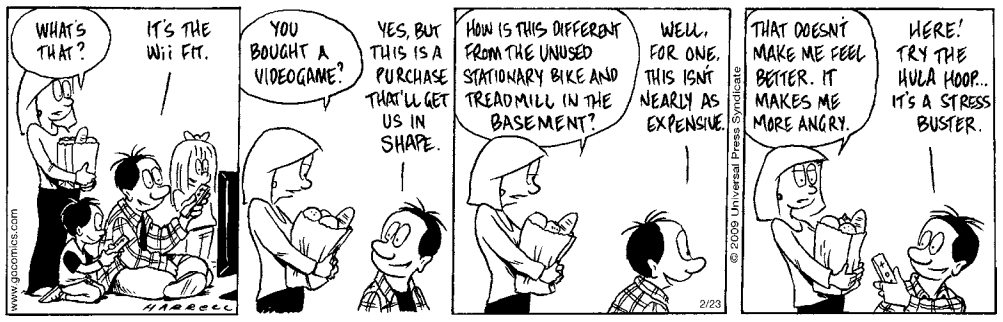
JIM DAVIS 2-23

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


WHAT'S THAT?
IT'S THE Wii FIT.
YOU BOUGHT A VIDEOGAME?
YES, BUT THIS IS A PURCHASE THAT'LL GET US IN SHAPE.
HOW IS THIS DIFFERENT FROM THE UNUSED STATIONARY BIKE AND TREADMILL IN THE BASEMENT?
WELL, FOR ONE, THIS ISN'T NEARLY AS EXPENSIVE.
THAT DOESN'T MAKE ME FEEL BETTER. IT MAKES ME MORE ANGRY.
HERE! TRY THE HULA HOOP... IT'S A STRESS BUSTER.
www.gocomics.com
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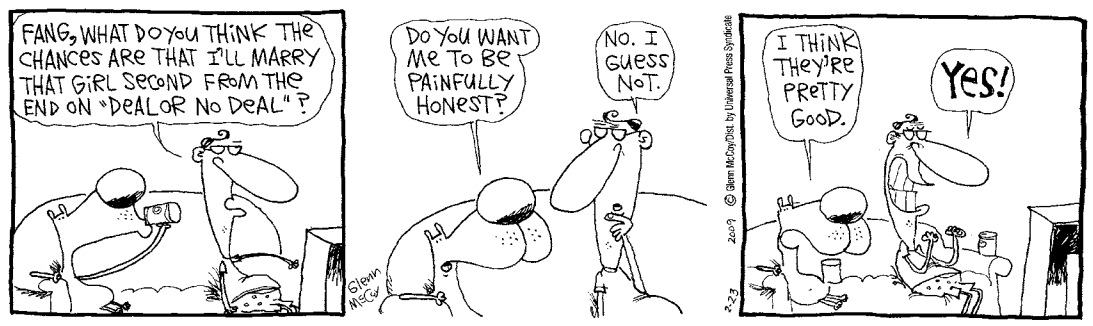
2/23

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy


FANG, WHAT DO YOU THINK THE CHANCES ARE THAT I'LL MARRY THAT GIRL SECOND FROM THE END ON "DEAL OR NO DEAL"?
DO YOU WANT ME TO BE PAINFULLY HONEST?
No. I GUESS NOT.
I THINK THEY'RE PRETTY GOOD.
Yes!
Glenn McCoy
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2-23

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

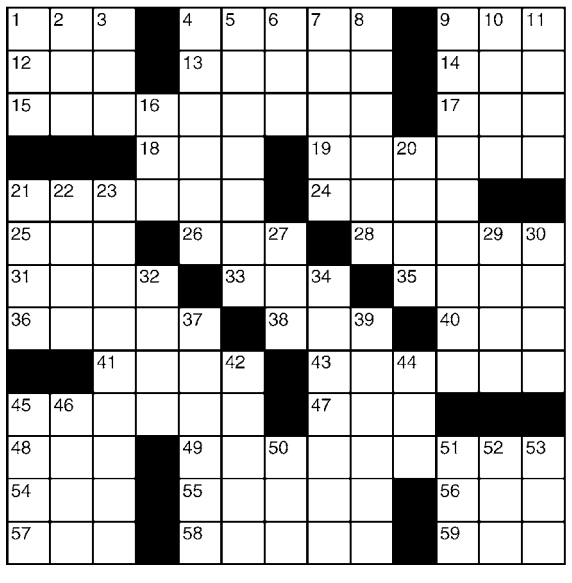
ACROSS
1 "The loneliest number"
4 "Danny Boy" music-makers
9 Definite article
12 Supporting
13 Lifeless, old-style
14 Tier
15 Happen
17 Gorilla
18 Can. neighbor
19 First game of the season
21 Denim, e.g.
24 Fishing equipment
25 Bobby of hockey
26 Fresh
28 Fleet-related
31 Harvest
33 Legislation
35 Long skirt
36 Forbidden acts
38 Speck
40 Every last bit
41 Totals
43 Multicolored
45 Stratagem
47 Jackie's second mate
48 Blackjack component
49 Change from one language to another
54 Coffee vessel
55 Greeting
56 Meadow
57 Danson or Kennedy
58 Convinces
59 Vanna's cohort

DOWN
1 Frequently
2 Neither partner
3 Historic time
4 Relay
5 Put on a jury
6 Hawaiian side dish
7 Mistake
8 Squelch, in a way
9 Pretoria's region
10 Optimist's feeling
11 Basin accessory
16 Pecan or almond
20 Dutch cheese
21 Old, stale jokes
22 Sandwich cookie
23 Exceed
27 Bankroll
29 Wheel holder
30 Easter flower
32 Sulk
34 Feminine
37 Metal workers
39 Human trunks
42 Threaded nail
44 Up to
45 Tense
46 Farm fraction
50 Carte lead-in
51 Matterhorn, for one
52 Afternoon social
53 Have a bite

Solution time: 24 mins.

O	F	T	■	E	R	N	E	■	T	W	O	S	
F	L	U	■	N	O	O	N	■	H	O	B	O	
F	I	B	■	L	O	A	D	■	R	O	O	F	
S	P	A	N	I	S	H	O	M	E	L	E	T	
■	■	■	E	S	T	■	W	E	E	■	■	■	
C	A	R	A	T	■	T	E	N	■	B	A	H	
A	T	O	P	■	B	U	D	■	S	U	R	E	
P	E	T	■	S	A	X	■	P	A	G	E	R	
■	■	■	K	I	T	■	M	A	R	■	■	■	
F	R	E	N	C	H	V	A	N	I	L	L	A	
L	O	P	E	■	M	I	N	D	■	A	I	L	
A	B	E	L	■	A	L	G	A	■	S	A	L	
K	E	E	T	■	T	A	O	S	■	T	R	Y	

Saturday's answer 2-23



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Kristin Davis, 44; Patricia Richardson, 58; John Sandford, 65; Peter Fonda, 69

Happy Birthday: Size down, get fit, get on track, secure your position and stabilize your life. You have the discipline to do whatever needs doing, so take the first step. Replace the negatives in your life with better interests, people and plans. A secret encounter will lead to a new beginning. Your numbers are 2, 7, 14, 26, 34, 37, 41

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): You owe it to yourself and the projects you want to get off the ground to ask others for help. You can make a difference to a lot of people by including them in your plans. Open your heart, your home and your good spirit. ✪✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): You have to use discretion if you want to avoid trouble. Stay away from anyone who is off-limits until you sort out what to do about the way you feel. Do what's best for everyone. ✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): The more you share your thoughts and interests, the greater the support you will get. This is a great time to get ahead and make changes. Your outgoing personality will lead to happiness. ✪✪✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): Give greater thought to your financial position and who in your life is costing you too much. It's time to discuss a new budget or rules and regulations to incorporate into your life. Don't let your own uncertainty be your downfall. ✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): Give more time to a relationship that you care about. Plan a trip or just spend the day doing things that you both enjoy. If you are single, get involved in something that interests you and, before you know it, you will have someone special in your life. ✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): Indecision will come back to haunt you. Just because something is new or unfamiliar doesn't mean it cannot work. Open your mind to the possibilities and you will be able to perfect whatever needs adjusting. You are on the verge of a breakthrough. ✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Involvement in projects you believe in or helping others will turn into something you least expect. Love looks promising and, with a little ingenuity, you can end up in a very nice position with someone you adore. ✪✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Don't believe everything you hear. Someone will try to meddle in your personal affairs. Go to the source and ask questions. This is not the time to make changes at home. ✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): Everything will depend on your performance and ability to convince others to join your cause. An idea you have can work as long as you don't go overboard. Someone you care about can help you get things off the ground. ✪✪✪✪

CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): You can't let a personal relationship cause you to make a poor decision. When it comes to finances, don't let emotions take over. Stick to what you know works and you will maintain your position. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Take a bit of a chance when it comes to a partnership, friendship or personal relationship. Make rules that you feel will work for everyone involved. Educational pursuits or getting involved in an interest group will change your life. ✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): There is a lot you are unaware of so, before you make promises or pursue something new, make sure you fully understand the consequences of not sticking to rules and regulations. A secret connection may backfire if you haven't been completely upfront. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are adventurous, curious and interested in trying new things. You have a vivid imagination and are always ahead of the crowd. You are dynamic, interesting and original.

Eugenia's Web sites: ***astroadvice.com*** *for fun,* ***eugenialast.com*** *for confidential consultations*

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

	8			4			6	
4		9				5		1
1	7			8			2	3
			9	2	8			
2								5
			1	5	7			
9	4			3			7	8
6		7				1		4
	3			1			5	

Difficulty Level ★ 2/23

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

2	1	8	9	3	7	4	6	5
9	4	5	6	1	8	3	2	7
3	6	7	2	5	4	1	8	9
8	5	3	4	9	6	2	7	1
7	2	4	3	8	1	9	5	6
6	9	1	7	2	5	8	3	4
1	7	6	8	4	3	5	9	2
5	3	2	1	6	9	7	4	8
4	8	9	5	7	2	6	1	3

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 2/21

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

WINTER BLASTS **Solution: 7 letters**

F	H	S	D	N	I	W	N	O	S	A	E	S	F	P
L	O	E	L	R	S	N	G	N	I	Z	E	E	R	F
O	L	R	S	I	I	O	Z	S	Y	V	X	E	O	O
O	I	U	E	U	C	V	E	E	E	T	C	P	S	R
D	D	S	B	C	N	K	E	R	R	I	I	A	T	M
I	A	O	C	U	A	I	E	E	P	O	L	C	B	S
N	Y	L	G	L	S	S	M	I	N	T	R	K	I	S
G	S	C	S	L	E	E	T	A	E	O	A	I	T	K
R	O	A	D	S	O	A	S	D	S	S	I	N	E	A
A	L	E	R	T	T	V	N	C	A	S	N	G	S	T
U	S	C	H	I	L	L	E	E	A	(P)	I	Y	E	E
P	P	L	O	W	E	D	R	S	(I)	R	A	V	W	R
E	S	N	O	W	B	A	L	(L)	S	L	V	M	E	S
L	L	A	F	W	O	N	(S)	P	E	L	L	E	T	S
A	B	L	I	Z	Z	A	R	D	C	O	A	T	S	N

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Alert, Areas, Blizzard, Buses, Chill, City, Clean, Closures, Coats, Delays, Drive, Extreme, Flooding, Forecast, Forms, Freezing, Frostbite, Gloves, Graupel, Holidays, Lakes, Massive, Minus, Packing, Pellets, Plowed, Precipitation, Rain, Region, Roads, Salted, Scarves, Season, Severe, Skaters, Sleet, Slick, Slip, Slow, Snowballs, Snowfall, Winds, Zero

Last Saturday's Answer: Resort

To order THE COLLECTED WONDERWORD, Volume 15, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26 or 27, send $5.95 each (US funds only) payable to Universal Press Syndicate plus $3 postage for the first book order, $1 p&h for each additional book. Send to WONDERWORD, 1130 Walnut St., Kansas City, Mo. 64106 or call toll-free, 1-800-642-6480. Order online at upuzzles.com.

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Looking for house and peoperty to lease for 55 years will pay cash. Please call at 323-7676. Mon-Fri.

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2 bedroom apt., furnished, 24hrs. water supply, safe & quiet neighborhood. Located at Beach Rd., Garapan & Gualo Rai Vill. For inquiries: call 483-2729 or 234-5593

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Ready for a change in health, $$, stress, anxiety, pain, attitude? individual, family or group sessions. BeverLi, CHTP, EFT 235-5992. Sldg scale. Learn to feel better.

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LOST CAMERA @ 360 Restaurant

Silver digital camera with pink cover case.
Cash reward if returned with picture.
No question ask.
Please call Ellen at 287-6118

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Over the limit.
Under arrest.

WHATZIT?™

Find the familiar phrase, saying or name in this arrangement of letters.

MIND CAUGHT MINED

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M-F daily

Saipan Tribune

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION, PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM
P.O. BOX 501370 CK, SAIPAN, MP 96950
HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT
OPEN COMPETITIVE & PROMOTIONAL OPPORTUNITY
EXAMINATION ANNOUNCEMENT

It is the policy of the Board of Education, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, that the Public School Personnel System shall be applied and administered according to the principles of equal employment opportunity as defined by the Northern Marianas Commonwealth Public Law 6 - 10, regardless of age, race, sex, religion, political affiliation or belief, marital status, disability or place of origin. Applicants for this position must be a U.S. Citizen or be eligible and authorized to work in the U.S., including the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Announcement No: **PSS – 2009 - 019**
Application & Employment Type: **Non-Certified**
Position Title: **FEDERAL PROGRAM COORDINATOR IV**
Pay Level/Step: **32 / 01-12** Per Annum Salary: **$24,889.35 - $ 42,558.00**
Opening Date: **February 19, 2009** Closing Date: **March 6, 2009**
Location: **PSS, FEDERAL PROGRAM OFFICE**
Benefits: Salary Commensurate with qualifications and experience, plus excellent benefits (including Life Insurance, Retirement Benefits, and Paid Leave/Holidays

Minimum Requirements:
Federal Program Coordinator IV – Graduation from an accredited university with a Bachelor's degree with five (5) years work experience in federal grant development, grant writing and administration.

***Detailed job description with qualification requirements can be obtained at PSS Human Resources Office at the 3rd Retirement Building, Capitol Hill, or download it online www.pss.cnmi.mp/humanresources**

Announcement No: **PSS – 2009 - 020**
Application & Employment Type: **Non-Certified**
Position Title: **PROGRAM MANAGER (Food & Nutrition Services Program Coordinator)**
Pay Level/Step: **35 / 01 - 12** Per Annum Salary: **$28,807.51 - $49,266.21**
Opening Date: **February 19, 2009** Closing Date: **March 6, 2009**
Location: **PSS – FOOD & NUTRITION SERVICES OFFICE, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES DIVISION**
Benefits: Salary Commensurate with qualifications and experience, plus excellent benefits (including Life Insurance, Retirement Benefits, and Paid Leave/Holidays

Minimum Requirements:
Graduation from a US accredited college or university with a Baccalaureate degree and at least six (6) years food services management experience or related work experience.

***Detailed job description with qualification requirements can be obtained at PSS Human Resources Office at the 3rd Retirement Building, Capitol Hill, or download it online www.pss.cnmi.mp/humanresources**

INTERESTED APPLICANTS MAY OBTAIN A DETAILED JOB DESCRIPTION WITH QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS AND APPLICATION FORMS AT THE PSS HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE AT THE 3rd RETIREMENT BUILDING, CAPITOL HILL. REQUIRED DOCUMENTS MUST BE ATTACHED TO COMPLETE APPLICATION FORMS: (1) COPY OF DIPLOMA/DEGREE, (2) TRANSCRIPTS, (3) POLICE CLEARANCE (FROM PLACE OF RESIDENCE FOR PAST SIX MONTHS), (4) VERIFICATION OF EMPLOYMENT LETTER, (5) RESUME, AND (6) TEACHING CERTIFICATE (IF APPLICABLE).COMPLETED APPLICATIONS AND REQUIRED DOCUMENTS MAY BE SUBMITTED TO THE HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE OR MAILED TO: CNMI PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM, ATTN: HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE, RETIREMENT BUILDING; THIRD FLOOR, P.O. BOX 501370 CK, SAIPAN, MP 96950, and TEL. #. (670) 237-3051, FAX # (670) 664-3707. ALSO VISIT http://www.pss.cnmi.mp/humanresources ON THE WORLDWIDE WEB.

CLASSIFIEDS RATES AND POLICIES

Saipan Tribune's Classifieds Section gives you the right exposure without hurting your pockets. Stretch your dollar and get results.

CLASSIFIED ADS

Saipan Tribune also offers a Super Saver Package—a complete 7-day run on both print and online edition, for as low as $25 per 3 liner ad for garage sales, apartment rentals, help wanted, auto and more. You can choose from any of below packages that fits your budget.

ADS (7DAYS)	COMBO (PRINT AND ONLINE)
• 3-Liner	$25
• 5-Liner	$35
• 3-Liner with picture	$45
• 5-Liner with picture	$55

ADVERTISING DEADLINE

Classified Ads

Ads must be submitted before 12 noon 2 days prior to publication date

Saturday Issue:
- *Saipan Tribune:* All ads placed Friday before 12 noon will come out Saturday issue and anything placed thereafter will be published on Monday issue.

CANCELLATION

Classified Ads

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

REFUNDS

Refunds will only be made if cancellation deadlines are met. No refunds will be made once ad is already printed.

CHECK YOUR ADS

Saipan Tribune will not be responsible for errors after the first day of publication. Errors should be called in before noon of the issue date. *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

ADVERTISING POLICY

All advertising in the *Saipan Tribune* are subject to applicable rate sheet, copies of which are available from the Advertising Sales Department (please call 235-8747, 235-2769 or 235-6397). All ads will be subject to approval prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit, refuse, reject or cancel any ad at any time. Also, *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

Griffey returns to Mariners after 9-year absence

PEORIA, Ariz. (AP)—Ken Griffey Jr.'s familiar blue cap was in its familiar, fun place - backward. The jokes, the huge gum bubbles and the boyish grin were back, too.

On his back, that blue No. 24, outlined in teal. It's the number with which he became a superstar in Seattle but hadn't worn in nine years.

"I thought about wearing 45, like Mike," Griffey jokingly said of his pal Michael Jordan, who once resumed his NBA career while briefly wearing that unfamiliar number. "But that didn't work."

Everything else did on a Saturday that rejuvenated the Mariners and all of Seattle.

AP

Seattle Mariners outfielder Ken Griffey Jr. talks to the media during a news conference at spring training baseball Saturday, Feb 21, 2009 in Peoria, Ariz.

The 39-year-old slugger thought to be fading to retirement last year looked revitalized, like it was 1989. Junior was "home" again. Back at his old, corner locker for spring training. Back where his career began as a 19-year-old with a grin and a backward cap 20 years ago.

"I knew exactly where I was going. I think I know this clubhouse better than most people here," baseball's active leader with 611 home runs said with a laugh.

In that clubhouse, he cracked up awed Mariners teammates - some nearly half his age. Then came a formal, superhero's welcome of a news conference.

It began with Griffey looking uncomfortable, laughing nervously behind his hand with his head bowed. It ended with him zinging jokes around the room.

"You always want to start and end your career with the same team," he said. "Not saying that this is the end of my career, but it's an opportunity to do what I said I was going to do. And that's come back here."

The son of former Reds hitter Ken Griffey Sr. said of Seattle: "I was pretty much raised in Cincinnati. But I grew up here."

He later hit in an indoor cage for 12 minutes, with rookie manager Don Wakamatsu pitching. His first workout with the Mariners comes Sunday morning.

He called the nine years since he's left "a little rough sometimes" because of injuries that have derailed a still-outstanding career.

He missed time in Cincinnati with injuries to his shoulder, hamstring, quadriceps, ankle and foot. Then after he was traded to the Chicago White Sox last July, Griffey had arthroscopic knee surgery. Many thought his career was finished.

The Mariners are banking on him being as healthy as he was in 2007, when he hit 30 home runs and had 93 RBIs with the Reds.

Asked what he expected from himself at age 39, Griffey looked to his right at Wakamatsu and joked: "I figure that I should start off in the leadoff spot, just move Ichiro down

"No, I may not hit 50 (home runs), I may not hit 40. I may not hit 30," he said. "But I can move runners over, do the little things it takes to win.

"My dad had three rings. I want one."

Griffey took the advice of legends Willie Mays and Hank Aaron while he weighed similar offers from Atlanta and Seattle this week. He said you can't think of baseball in San Francisco without thinking of Mays, you can't think of Atlanta without Aaron.

When asked if he wants people to think "Griffey" when they think of Seattle, he said: "This is a step in the right direction."

He is the Mariners' career leader in home runs (398), single-season home runs (56, twice) and slugging percentage (.569). He trails only Edgar Martinez in team history in games played with 1,535.

After resolving final contract details, he signed a $2 million, one-year deal Saturday morning. The contract includes plate-appearances and attendance-based bonuses that could push his pay toward $4 million, a nod to the buzz from Arizona to Seattle in the three days since he agreed to return.

The Braves thought Griffey was coming there this week because he wanted to stay close to his family. They did not offer the attendance bonuses. The Mariners threw those in last week, realizing how adding much adding Griffey would galvanize a fan base numbed last year by 101 losses.

Mariners president Chuck Armstrong, the key man who brought Griffey back, said the team lost money for the first time since it moved into palatial Safeco Field in 1999. That didn't hurt in wanting Griffey, either - though the Mariners' baseball people insist they wanted him because he can still hit and will lead a clubhouse that was a fractured mess last season.

They have already decided Griffey will be in left field when his legs feel fine. When baseball's active leader with 611 home runs says he needs a break, he'll be the DH.

"If he plays, we draw and we win, he ought to get more money," said Armstrong, who befriended Griffey almost from the day Seattle drafted him first overall in 1987. "I hope I write those checks."

Armstrong had been wanting Griffey back since 2000, when he called the slugger two weeks after Seattle traded him to Cincinnati and told him he wanted Griffey retiring as a Mariner. About 10 days ago, Seattle general manager Jack Zduriencik decided Griffey was the left-handed bat he needed. Armstrong then flew to Pebble Beach, Calif., where Griffey was playing in a golf tournament, for a six-hour push to get Griffey to return.

Last Sunday night, Griffey was at Mariners' camp for a physical and a two-hour meeting with Wakamatsu and Zduriencik. Monday, he met with Braves officials in Orlando.

Tuesday and Wednesday, he studied the schedules of the Mariners and Braves. Then he brought out the summer basketball schedule for his 13-year-old daughter Taryn, the youth-league slate of 6-year-old son Tevin and the high school football schedule for 15-year-old son Trey. He spread all those across the kitchen of his home.

"A couple of my friends thought I was drafting someone, for a first-round pick. It was like a war room. I had stuff everywhere," he said. "It was tough, but I think I made the right decision.

Mickelson pulls away at Riviera

Northern Trust Open

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Phil Mickelson was in contention for the first time all year and wanted to make sure he stayed there.

Moments after signing his scorecard following the second round—nine shots worse than his opening round—he called Butch Harmon in Las Vegas and asked if he could meet him on the range Saturday morning at Riviera.

The work paid off in a big way at the Northern Trust Open.

Mickelson made four straight birdies in the final hour of the third round to pull away from a strong leaderboard with a 9-under 62, topping his personal best at Riviera he had set two days earlier and building a four-shot lead going into the final round.

"He's pretty good at what he does," Mickelson said. "Having him be able to be right there and identify it was nice."

Lefty had a chance to tie the course record until his 10-foot birdie on the 18th hole was struck too hard and missed above the hole, but that was no reason to complain. He was at 16-under 197, four shots clear of Andres Romero.

A parabola could be used to diagram his first three days - 63-72-62. All that matters to Mickelson is that after a sluggish start to his West Coast Swing, he believes he's headed down the right path.

"I feel like—I don't want to say back on track—but I have a direction of where I want to go, and my iron play was much, much better because of it," he said.

Five players had at least a share of the lead at one point in the third round, but what had been shaping up as a shootout at Riviera soon turned into a showcase for Mickelson.

It began with a tee shot into 4 feet on the par-3 14th for the outright lead. Mickelson followed that with an 8-foot birdie on the 15th, a 35-foot birdie on the 16th, and an up-and-down from the bunker on the par-5 17th for his fourth straight birdie.

"To see a few putts go in, it's obviously a great feeling because it rewards the iron play," Mickelson said.

Just his luck, Harmon had returned Friday from a vacation in the Bahamas.

"We mostly worked on his lower body, keep it quiet," Harmon said. The idea was to keep Mickelson's legs more still to allow him more freedom to swing. It must have worked, for Mickelson only missed four fairways and two greens and put together his lowest score since he opened with a 62 at Spyglass Hill four years ago in the AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am.

Romero did his part to keep close with birdies on his last three holes that he called "close to perfect," giving him a 65. He will need a big round, but the Argentine has shown he is capable. He made 10 birdies in 16 holes two years ago in the final round at Carnoustie, the toughest links in the British Open rotation.

"I have a lot of confidence in the putter, just like when I made those 10 birdies at Carnoustie," he said. "I am four shots behind Mickelson, the defending champion. It's a tough job, but I will try to do my best. It's not against him, it's against the course. And if I play good against the course, maybe I have a chance."

AP

Phil Mickelson pumps his fist as he birdies on the third green in the third round of the Northern Trust Open golf tournament at Riviera Country Club in the Pacific Palisades area of Los Angeles on Saturday, Feb. 21, 2009.

They will be joined in the last group by Fred Couples, who was poised to give himself a good chance to win with a 65, only to see a familiar face spoil the occasion.

The last time Couples was in the last group was the 2006 Masters—with Mickelson, who went on to win.

Couples, at 49 and in his last full year on the PGA Tour, shot 30 on the front nine and briefly held the lead on his favorite golf course east of Augusta. He shot a 65 and walked off the 18th green only one shot out of the lead.

By the time he reached the media center, Mickelson had run off three straight birdies. When Couples finished his interview, Lefty already had made his fourth in a row and posted his 62.

"This is my big day tomorrow to have a shot at winning," Couples said. "I don't want these guys being 19 under. When I was coming down in the cart, I was telling the guy I thought maybe another 6 under might do it. Might need a 9 under."

The way Mickelson is going, even that might not be enough. This is his largest 54-hole lead since he was ahead by eight shots at the BellSouth Classic in 2006, winning by 13.

Rory Sabbatini (67), K.J. Choi (67) and Scott McCarron (70) joined Couples in the group at 11-under 202. Another shot behind was Mark Calcavecchia (64), Steve Stricker (69) and Pebble Beach winner Dustin Johnson (67).

Mickelson's late surge of birdies might have killed any hopes of a nostalgic weekend at Riviera.

Calcavecchia, on the 20-year anniversary of his victory at the course, opened his third round with an eagle at No. 10, made birdie on all the par 5s and shot a 64 to finish at 10-under 203.

As if Calcavecchia needed a reminder of how long he has been playing, his 19-year-old daughter Brittany—still in the womb when he first won at Riviera—is now a freshman at Long Beach State and followed him during the second round.

Wade rallies Heat past 76ers

MIAMI (AP)—Jermaine O'Neal and Jamario Moon seem like they'll enjoy this Miami Heat playoff chase.

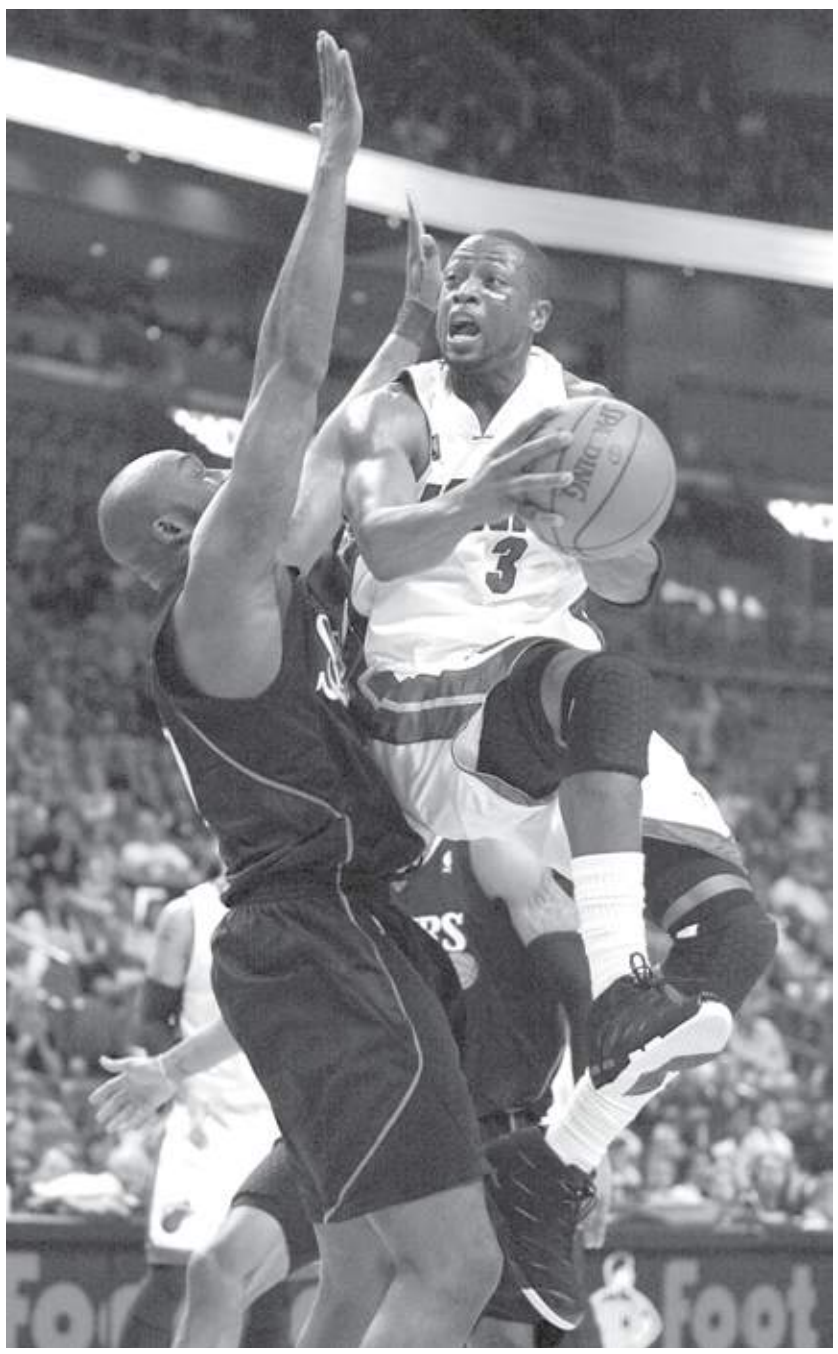
Dwyane Wade had 25 points and nine assists, O'Neal and Moon combined to score 10 fourth-quarter points in their second game since arriving from Toronto, and the Heat improved their Eastern Conference postseason positioning by beating the Philadelphia 76ers 97-91 on Saturday.

Miami was down by three with 2:52 remaining, then went on an 8-0 run when the game mattered most.

"Probably the most important game of the season so far," said Heat forward Udonis Haslem, who finished with 13 points and 10 rebounds, including a key jumper with 1:33 remaining. "We felt like this was a must-win situation for us."

O'Neal had 17 points and 10 rebounds and Moon scored 12 for Miami. They were in perfect tune with Wade in the final minutes, with Moon getting free to score off a pair of baseline lobs and O'Neal scoring twice in a span of four possessions midway through the fourth quarter to take some pressure off the NBA's second-leading scorer.

"I felt so much more comfortable tonight than I felt the previous night," O'Neal said. "I've been working hard and we feel like we have a chance to keep building from here."



AP

Philadelphia 76ers Reggie Evans, left, tries to block Miami Heat's Dwyane Wade during the third-quarter NBA basketball game action in Miami, Fla., Saturday, Feb. 21, 2009.

Spurs 98, Wizards 67

In Washington, the player that got away, Roger Mason, comes back with the San Antonio Spurs and drops 25 points—on a night the awful Washington Wizards post their lowest points total in six years.

A season of embarrassment for president Ernie Grunfield's front office hit another low Saturday as the travel-weary Spurs beat the Wizards 98-67. San Antonio wrapped up its annual rodeo road stretch with a 5-3 record, while Washington was left to wonder how much better than 30 games under .500 it would be if Mason were still playing in his hometown.

"That's what we need," Wizards forward Antawn Jamison said. "We need a veteran who knows how to play the game, a guy who can play multiple positions, a guy who can knock down big shots, a guy who is defensively sound. That's a luxury we had last year, and that's a luxury we don't have this year.

Jazz 102, Hornets 88

In Salt Lake City, Deron Williams had 20 points and 13 assists as the Utah Jazz honored the memory of Larry H. Miller with a win over the New Orleans Hornets.

The Jazz held a pregame moment of silence and the players wore patches with the initials LHM as Miller's courtside seat remained empty during a game he would have especially enjoyed.

The Jazz improved to 10 games above .500 for the first time this season and after the buzzer, Williams walked the game ball across the court to hand it to Miller's widow, Gail, and hugged her. Miller, 64, died Friday of complications from diabetes.

Chris Paul had 24 points and seven assists for New Orleans, which was coming off an overtime loss in Los Angeles the night before.

Mavericks 116, Kings 95

In Dallas, Brandon Bass scored 16 of his season-high 20 points in the second quarter and Dallas' reserves contributed 54 points to lift the Mavericks past the Sacramento Kings.

Dallas, which has won 11 straight home games over Sacramento in the regular season, scored a season-high 70 points in the first half—with 36 of those coming from bench players.

Josh Howard scored 20 points, reserve James Singleton had season-high 19 with 12 rebounds and Dirk Nowitzki added 12 points for the Mavericks. Dallas pulled all their starters early in the fourth quarter.

Beno Udrih had 18 points, and Spencer Hawes and Francisco Garcia each scored 17 for the Kings, who have the NBA's worst record at 12-45.

Garnett out 2-3 weeks with muscle strain

PHOENIX (AP)—The Boston Celtics say forward Kevin Garnett will miss two to three weeks because of a strained muscle behind his knee.

Garnett returned Friday to Boston after injuring the knee on the team's West Coast trip. Celtics spokesman Jeff Twiss says Saturday that team doctor Brian McKeon diagnosed the muscle strain after tests and an MRI.

Garnett injured his knee in the first half of Boston's 90-85 loss to the Utah Jazz on Thursday. He landed gingerly and immediately motioned to the bench for a substitute.

After the game, the team decided to send him back to Boston as a precaution when the soreness in his knee persisted. The Celtics play in Phoenix on Sunday.

AP

Boston Celtics forward Kevin Garnett (5) hops in pain during the second quarter against the Utah Jazz in the NBA basketball game Thursday, Feb. 19, 2009, in Salt Lake City.

Garnett hurt himself while going up for an alley-oop late in the first half. He landed gingerly and motioned immediately to the bench for a substitute. He warmed up with his teammates before the second half, but the Celtics didn't want to risk anything over a regular season game in February.

The Celtics could have used him, too, as Utah outscored Boston 30-19 to pull out the victory. The Celtics led by 11 in the third quarter, but couldn't hold off the Jazz at the end.

"They put a body on you. They knock you around," Utah coach Jerry Sloan said of the defending NBA champion. "Our guys, sometimes we want to play in a tuxedo. And when you're playing against those guys, you better get it off and get ready to get nasty."

The Jazz did just that.

Utah was 12-for-17 from the floor in the final period, closing the game on an 8-2 run. The Celtics hurt themselves with 19 turnovers and were 19-for-29 from the foul line.

"It really came down to free throws by us and turnovers," Rivers said. "We make our free throws, we win the game. And we if we don't turn the ball over, we win the game."

Deron Williams had 18 points and 10 assists, Mehmet Okur scored 19 and Matt Harpring added eight points off the bench, including a tie-breaking jumper with 1:01 left to play that put Utah up for good.

"We battled with them all night. It's a great win for our team," Williams said.

Paul Pierce led the Celtics with 20 points, but was pestered down the stretch by Harpring's defense. Harpring drew an offensive foul on the Celtics' star and helped hold him to 2-of-9 shooting in the fourth quarter.

"I love doing that. This is why you play the game of basketball—for times like this," Harpring said.

Rajon Rondo added 15 points and seven assists for Boston, which pulled away in the third quarter despite early foul trouble.

Warriors 133, Thunder 120

In Oakland, California, Golden State coach Don Nelson earned his 1,300th victory Saturday night, with Stephen Jackson scoring 26 points and Corey Maggette adding 25 in the Warriors' 133-120 victory over the Oklahoma City Thunder.

Nelson is just the second coach in NBA history to reach the milestone, joining good friend Lenny Wilkens, who has 1,332 career wins. The Warriors' fifth victory in seven games was vintage Nellieball, with his Warriors reeling off their fourth 120-point game of the month to compensate for their indifferent defense and 17 turnovers.

Kevin Durant scored 32 points for the Thunder, who have lost five straight. Russell Westbrook added 31 points and 11 assists, but Oklahoma City dropped to 3-24 on the road.

Top NFL prospect Crabtree diagnosed with stress fracture

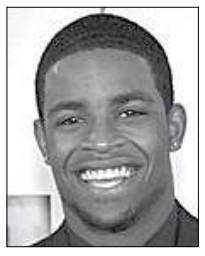
INDIANAPOLIS (AP)—Texas Tech's Michael Crabtree wanted to solidify his status as the top receiver in the NFL draft at this weekend's scouting combine. Instead, he left more questions than answers.

On Saturday, NFL doctors diagnosed Crabtree with a stress fracture in his left foot. He reportedly will need surgery to insert a screw and might face a recovery of 10 or more weeks.

"It's not a career-ending injury or anything like that," Bears coach Lovie Smith said. "He's a good football player, and he's got plenty of time to get well."

NFL officials would not immediately confirm details of the injury or the surgery, though coaches were told about it during Saturday's first drills. Crabtree was not scheduled to work out until Sunday.

NFL Network first reported the injury, and later reported that Crabtree would not have the surgery until after his pro day at Texas Tech next month, so he can run the 40-yard dash for scouts and coaches.



Crabtree

Only NFL Network reporters are permitted inside the seating area of Lucas Oil Stadium, where workouts are held. Crabtree was not available for interviews Saturday.

All of the roughly 330 players at the combine spend their first day getting measured and going through medical checks. Those with additional questions are often sent to a nearby hospital for further examination.

That's apparently when Crabtree's injury was discovered, culminating a bad week.

Despite being listed at 6-foot-3 on Texas Tech's roster last season, Crabtree measured just slightly taller than 6-foot-1 Friday. The difference could change the opinions of some scouts, who thought Crabtree fit the mold of Larry Fitzgerald as a tall receiver.

Now there's even a bigger problem.

Scouts may have to go through the entire evaluation process without seeing Crabtree work out in person. The draft is April 25-26, and Crabtree was expected to be picked in the top 10.

If he opted to have the surgery before running for scouts, teams would not have any workout numbers for Crabtree to measure against other prospects. The lack of information, or the injury, might not hurt his standing.

Last season, he caught another 97 passes for 1,165 yards and 19 touchdowns despite being slowed by a ankle injury. The injury, his father told the Lubbock Avalanche-Journal in January, had already raised questions about Crabtree's durability.

Saturday's revelation won't help provide those answers, though there is precedent for teams using first-round picks on players coming back from injuries.

Buffalo took running back Willis McGahee 23rd overall in 2003 after he seriously injured his knee in his final game at Miami.

"He has a history, and his history is pretty good," said Smith, whose team has the No. 18 pick and needs receivers. "I think he'll be OK."

If Crabtree's stock does drop, receivers such as Florida's Percy Harvin and Missouri's Jeremy Maclin could move up. That's not how Harvin wanted to move up draft boards.

JAPANESE

From Page 28

and fifth in road race (2:11:02.67) to finish fifth place overall and second in the masters.

Completing the Top 10 among 22 competitors in the expert class were Federico Fernandez (2:34:13), Florian Braig (2:36:23), Renato Calage (2:37:23), Cesar Fortaleza (2:37:23), and Lewie Tenorio (2:37:28).

In the women's division, Melanie Daly beat Jazy's wife, Mylene Garcia, after the latter lost her track.

Daly clocked in at 3:27:12 while Mylene timed in at 3:28:11.

Mylene arrived at the finish line early, but was told she needed to take a round trip of the course from the American Memorial Park down to the road to Kagman via the Capital Hill and at the Radar Station in Tanapag.

For Takahiro, unfamiliarity with the course was not a problem, as he needed only the right strategy to do it.

The Japanese champion went along with the riders who knew the course much and after the first round, he suddenly broke away from the rest of the pack at the Radar Station.

Philip Pedernal won the novice division, as he submitted a time of 2:07:10 afer coming in second in the ITT (23:46) and third in the road race (1:44:10:24). Fred Camacho was second in 2:10:13, finishing first in ITT (23:45) and fourth in the 33.5-km road race (1:48:13:89). Shogo Ando was third overall with 2:12:14, coming in fourth in the ITT (24:10) and fifth in the road race (1:48:14.64).

Alberto Cataina Jr. won the mountain bike race with his total time of 2:00:58 after submitting the lowest time of 22:50 in the ITT and crossing the finish line in the road race first in 1:38:58.97.

Gary Bandoja was second overall (2:01:19), finishing first in ITT (22:10) and second in road race (1:39:19.49), while Jose Ngiraibuuch came in third (2:07:10), after placing third both in ITT (23:14) and road race (1:44:10.50).

To spice up the successful event, a sport class was added in the competition with Rotary Club of Saipan president Ben Babauta winning with a time of 2:00:33. He topped the ITT with 37:46, but was only seventh in the road race with 2:04:52.

After the Saipan stages, Guam will host the last two on March 14 and 15.

The event is being supported by Take Care. Sponsors on Saipan include Tan Holdings, Hard Rock Café, DFS Galleria, Saipan Grand Hotel, LBT Appraisal, Foamacon Liner, Fiesta Resort and Spa Saipan, Saipan Shipping, BankPacific, Coco Restaurant, Pacific Islands Club, Pacific Traders Insurance, and Auto Glass Pro.

Golf fundraising tourney set for March 28 at COP

The Committee to Elect Juan N. Babauta and Galvin Deleon Guerrero will be holding a fundraising golf tournament on March 28 at Coral Ocean Point.

The one-day event will have competitions in six flights, namely the Championship Flight, A, B, C, Ladies, and Seniors.

Prizes await the top three finishers in each flight. Winners will be decided by gross scores.

Entrance fee is $100, which will also cover the greens fee, cart fee, and banquet.

Check-in time for next month's tournament is at 6am, while the shotgun start will be at 7am.

Organizers of the tournament and members of the committee are expecting more than 100 players joining the tournament and having a chance to talk with Babauta and Deleon Guerrero, who will be running for governor and lt. governor in next year's election.

For more information, contact tournament director Juan L. Babauta at 285-7759 or the Committee to Elect Juan N. Babauta and Galvin Deleon Guerrero at 483-5251. Edward M. Deleon Guerrero chairs the committee. ***(PR)***

SCARY

From Page 28

Oliver Secharmidal gave Rock Steady its first run of the year on a triple by Toi Celis at the bottom of the first inning. Rock Steady drew two more runs from new recruit Kyle Kaipat and veteran Ed Manibusan for a 3-0 lead.

The Rangers made two runs courtesy of Clifton Sillil and David Camacho at the top of fourth to remain afloat, 2-3.

Celis, Manny Sablan, and Byron Kaipat scored anew for Rock Steady at the bottom fifth for a 6-2 lead on the way to a win.

Despite the loss, the Ford Rangers showed some semblance of a team that had always been a force to reckon with in the league.

The intermittent rains slowed down Rock Steady's game, as the downpour halted the game in two occasions with the last time at the bottom fifth.

When play resumed, the Rangers found their targets with David Camacho sparking a three-run explosion. Kelvin Kapileo and Pete Tomokane also dashed to home plate, supported by an RBI single by Hector Efraim, as the team moved to within a striking distance, 5-6.

But that was all the Rangers could muster, as Rock Steady's winning pitcher Nick San Nicolas regained his confidence, allowed only one of the next 13 batters to reach first base, and struck out four.

San Nicolas had a total of eight strikeouts and Rock Steady protected the lead in the next three and a half innings.

Rock Steady kept most of its players from last year's roster.

The returnees included Mike Sablan (head coach), Toi Celis, Joey Dela Cruz, Derron Flores, Manny Sablan, Brian Kaipat, Ed Manibusan, Oliver Secharmidal, Martin Pangelinan, Elie Lizama, Ben Leon Guerrero, Ray Celis, John Mafnas, Nick San Nicolas, Shane Mendiola, and Vince Sablan.

Its new players are John Paul Lizama, Alvin Takai, Giovanni Ayuyu, Kyle Kaipat, and John Reyes.

Rock Steady lost one of its key players, centerfielder Tyrone Omar, to another team this year. The reigning MVP Omar is now with the Young Guns, who are composed mostly of rookies or new graduates from the Big League.

Despite losing their debut, Rangers team manager Craig Tenorio expressed optimism about their chances this year. The Rangers were in the finals four times in the last five years. They had already won the title twice, in 2003 and 2005, were runners-up in 2004, 2006, and 2008, and third in 2007.

The Rangers are composed of essentially the same players from last year's lineup, and acquired the services of six newcomers.

The veterans included Dung Tenorio, Shine Tenorio, Craig Sanchez (player-asst. coach), Ben Tagabuel, Vinnie Sablan, JP Sablan, Mario Sablan, Peter Sablan, Peter Tomokane, Kelvin Kapileo, Clifton Silil, J.J. Laniyo, Franco Flores, Jess Iguel, Ben Taisacan, JP Flores, and John Flores (head coach)

The new recruits are Gary Cruz, Shane Yamada, Rey Celis, Mark Toves, David Camacho, and Hector Efraim.

AYUYUS

From Page 28

opposite the players' bench, Ogumoro threw the ball to Kyle Concepcion at the right sideline.

Concepcion was trapped at the sideline, as three Southern defenders collapsed on him, but he managed to see Pangelinan cutting to the middle and made the pass.

Pangelinan, who was several steps away from his closest defender, received the ball, dribbled to the left first, before making a crossover for a reverse layup, with 1.5 seconds left in the extension period.

Left without a timeout, Southern quickly inbounded the ball with Josh Kiyoshi pulling up for a desperation triple from midcourt and missing the shot that capped the Rays' win-less season.

Southern had several chances to earn its first win of the season and make a return trip to the finals. In overtime, it led by four, 73-69, with 40 seconds left on the clock.

But Concepcion made an inside basket in the Ayuyus' offensive set cutting the lead to two, 71-73, with 32 seconds left on the clock.

After Concepcion's deuce, Kagman played pressured defense from the backcourt and forced a turnover. Edwin Camacho intercepted Masga's pass to Ajoste and the former went for a daredevil drive and canned the game-tying basket, with 24.9 remaining in the game.

Southern committed another error when Ajoste stepped on the line in a baseline inbound play. But the Rays regained possession when a driving Concepcion banged into Masga and lost the ball to the right baseline.

Rays coach Jesse Tudela called a time out do map out a play in the last 8.3 seconds of the match.

When the game resumed, Nathan Flores was assigned to inbound the ball from midcourt for Southern. But he was called for a five-second violation, failing to pass the ball to his teammates.

Ogumoro showed Flores how to make a perfect inbound play, passing the ball to Concepcion, who then found Pangelinan at the middle for the game-winning basket.

Earlier, two free throws from Iguel in the last 9.4 seconds of the regulation sent the game in overtime.

Southern had an opportunity to win the game in regulation, but Lawrence Echon buzzer-beating jumper near the 15-foot line went too strong, bouncing off the back iron of the rim.

Lady Dolphins gain finals entry, again

In the girls varsity division, there will be a rematch between defending champions Lady Ayuyus and the Lady Dolphins.

MHS secured the second finals ticket after crushing the Lady Rays in the playoffs, 78-42.

The Lady Ayuyus earlier booked the first finals seat after whipping Mt. Carmel School. 64-40.

Girls

MHS 78 – Pagarao 24, L. Rangamar 17, Palero 11, Taclia d 9, Benavente 5, Guzman 4, Padilla 2, Javier 2, Duhig 2.

SSHS 42 – Flores 14, Sikyang 9, Joseph 8, Babauta 4, Mendiola 4, Kim 3.

Scoring by quarters: 14-11, 30-20, 57-36, 78-42.

Boys

KHS 75 – Iguel 21, Camacho 13, Pangelinan 9, Concepcion 9, Ogumoro 9, Brel 8, Hossain 2, Manglona 2.

SSHS 73 – Ajoste 19, Flores 16, Kiyoshi 15, Mendoza 12, Echon 4, Masga 4, Iglecias 3.

Scoring by quarters: 8-19, 25-33, 44-43, 61-all, 75-73.

DCCA

From Page 28

runs each. The list included Craig Sanchez, Joey Dela Cruz, James Fleming, and Bill Limes.

Dela Cruz, the league's co-leader in homeruns with 11, went 3-for-4 at bat and made three runs, one triple, one home run, and four RBIs.

Sakisat, Darren Flores, and Bob Lizama added two runs each, while Jun Saralu came up with one.

No Zone 16, POI 6

In other results, second baseman Jerry Ayuyu posted the season's most home runs in a game with three to lead No Zone to a 16-6 victory over POI after only six innings.

With the win, No Zone improved its record to 10-4, tying Joeten Motor Jets and Docomo in fourth to sixth place.

POI absorbed its seventh defeat in 13 games and is tied with CRM/DEQ at 10th to 11th spots.

Jerry Ayuyu was 4-of-4 and scored four runs and one double.

No Zone had a total of six home runs with Manny Sablan hitting two and Ned Norita scoring one in the third.

Outfielder Gary Cruz was without a homer, but still contributed on offense, hitting 3-for-4 at bat and posting two doubles and five RBIs.

Ton Lizama had one homer for POI in the sixth, but that did not change the color of the game, as this team hit only 11-for-30 at the plate.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	44	12	.786	–
Philadelphia	27	27	.509	16 1/2
New Jersey	24	32	.429	20
New York	23	31	.426	20
Toronto	21	36	.368	23 1/2

Central Division

Cleveland	42	11	.792	–
Detroit	27	26	.509	15
Milwaukee	27	31	.466	17 1/2
Chicago	25	30	.455	18
Indiana	23	34	.404	21

Southeast Division

Orlando	40	14	.741	–
Atlanta	32	23	.582	8 1/2
Miami	29	25	.528	10 1/2
Charlotte	22	33	.400	18 1/2
Washington	13	43	.236	28 1/2

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

San Antonio	37	17	.679	–
Houston	34	21	.618	4
New Orleans	32	22	.604	5
Dallas	33	22	.593	4 1/2
Memphis	15	40	.273	22

Northwest Division

Denver	37	18	.673	–
Portland	34	20	.630	2 1/2
Utah	33	23	.582	4
Minnesota	18	36	.333	18 1/2
Oklahoma City	13	43	.236	25

Pacific Division

L.A. Lakers	45	10	.818	–
Phoenix	31	23	.574	13 1/2
Golden State	20	36	.345	25
L.A. Clippers	13	42	.236	32
Sacramento	12	45	.214	34 1/2

Yesterday's Games

Miami 97, Philadelphia 91
San Antonio 98, Washington 67
Utah 102, New Orleans 88
Golden State 133, Oklahoma City 120
Dallas 116, Sacramento 95

NORTHERN TRUST OPEN SCORES

LOS ANGELES (AP) – Scores Saturday from the Northern Trust Open, a $6.3 million US PGA Tour event played at the 7,298-yard, par-71 Riviera Country Club:

Third Round

Phil Mickelson	63-72-62	197
Andres Romero	66-70-65	201
Fred Couples	67-70-65	202
Rory Sabbatini	68-67-67	202
K.J. Choi	66-69-67	202
Scott McCarron	64-68-70	202
Mark Calcavecchia	70-69-64	203
Dustin Johnson	66-70-67	203
Steve Stricker	68-66-69	203
J.B. Holmes	73-67-64	204
Luke Donald	66-69-69	204
Dean Wilson	66-72-67	205
Richard S. Johnson	70-68-67	205
Robert Allenby	70-67-68	205
Briny Baird	67-70-68	205
Hunter Mahan	69-69-68	206
Brian Davis	69-69-68	206
Brendon de Jonge	69-70-67	206
Ben Curtis	68-69-69	206
Tim Clark	68-72-66	206
Chris DiMarco	68-72-66	206
Rich Beem	68-69-69	206
Geoff Ogilvy	68-67-71	206
Tommy Armour III	67-67-72	206
Kevin Sutherland	72-67-68	207
Jeff Klauk	67-72-68	207
Jason Bohn	73-66-68	207
Kenny Perry	70-68-69	207
Woody Austin	68-70-69	207
Bill Lunde	69-67-71	207
Graeme McDowell	70-71-66	207
Rocco Mediate	70-68-70	208
Angel Cabrera	72-68-68	208
Marc Turnesa	69-68-71	208
Bubba Watson	69-71-68	208
Kevin Na	67-69-72	208
Jimmy Walker	69-70-70	209
Chad Campbell	72-68-69	209
Joe Ogilvie	70-70-69	209
John Merrick	66-71-72	209
Jerry Kelly	72-68-69	209
David Duval	70-69-71	210
Jeev M. Singh	69-70-71	210
Retief Goosen	68-71-71	210
Jeff Quinney	69-71-70	210
Bob Estes	72-65-73	210
Brandt Jobe	68-72-70	210
Kirk Triplett	67-70-73	210
Charley Hoffman	68-72-70	210
Pat Perez	69-66-75	210
Carl Pettersson	68-71-72	211
D.J. Trahan	67-72-72	211
Soren Hansen	70-69-72	211
John Mallinger	70-68-73	211
Ernie Els	71-67-73	211
Ryuji Imada	67-73-71	211
Mike Weir	70-71-70	211
Stuart Appleby	71-68-73	212
Nick Watney	71-68-73	212
Jim Furyk	66-71-75	212
Brad Adamonis	70-70-72	212
Michael Letzig	70-71-71	212
Stephen Ames	71-70-71	212
Scott Verplank	71-70-71	212
Cameron Beckman	70-71-71	212
Bart Bryant	74-67-71	212
Bo Van Pelt	68-71-74	213
Matt Kuchar	70-68-75	213
Aaron Baddeley	71-70-72	213
Charles Howell III	72-67-75	214
Jason Gore	69-70-75	214
Daniel Chopra	73-67-74	214
Ben Crane	72-68-74	214
Charlie Wi	70-71-74	215
Ryan Moore	68-71-77	216

By The Associated Press

LOCAL SCORES

BUDWEISER CAGING STANDINGS

CNMI Nationals	5	1
Ol'Aces	4	2
IT& E	4	2
Quichocho Law Office	3	3
Docomo	2	3
Diamond Auto Fixers	1	4
Runnin' Rebels	1	5

BUDWEISER SOFTBALL STANDINGS

Men's Division

DCCA	15	0
CPA	10	2
Beach Boys	10	3
No Zone	10	4
Docomo	10	4
Joeten Motor Jets	10	4
Freedom Air	9	2
Legislature	9	5
P&S	6	6
CRM/DEQ	6	7
POI	6	7
DLNR	6	8
CHC	4	8
PSS	4	9
PIC	3	9
Law & Order	3	9
CUC	3	9
Customs	2	10
Mayors	2	11
Hopwood	0	11

Women's Division

NMC	8	2
Finance	5	4
DCCA	4	5
CUC	4	4
CHC	1	7

The Week in Sports

Week of sports extravaganza

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Tennis, Little League baseball, swimming, beach volleyball, basketball … and the list went on, as the CNMI sports community had it all last week.

Northern Mariana Island Tennis Association started the busy week with the conclusion of its 2009 Coconut Classic Tennis Tournament at the American Memorial Park tennis courts.

After two weekends of action, the tournament announced the winners in the boys and girls' 10-and-under, 14-and-under, and 18-and-under age groups, men's and women's open, and in the mixed up doubles.

Over at Pacific Islands Club, Saipan Swim Club hosted 4th Annual Meek & Mighty Ocean Swim.

Cooper Graf successfully defended his title in the 5,000-meter Mighty division with a record-breaking swim. Graf timed in one hour, 2 minutes in the 5,000-meter Mighty swim, shattering his own mark of 1:03:16, which he posted in last year's edition of the annual event.

Other top winners were Grace Kimball (women's mighty), Maxi Braig and Melanie Daly (meek), and Kieran Daly and Abigail Martinsen (tweener).

At the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Ballfield, Saipan Little League Baseball kicked off its 2009 season with the traditional parade of 31 teams participating in the Majors, Juniors, Seniors, and Big League divisions.

Close to 500 players are competing in the SLLB this season with the Hustlers opening its bid in the Majors on a winning note after a 7-4 win over the Dragons.

While little leaguers were busy swinging bats at the "Tan Ko" field and at the Miguel "Basa" Pangelinan Ballfield, the island's beach spikers were trading volleys and serves during the Fiesta on the Beach Two-Person Beach Volleyball Tournament at the Fiesta Resort and Spa Saipan.

The pairs of Tyce Mister and Chris Nelson and Melissa Halaby and Mel Matson ruled the Marianas Cup warm-up tournament.

In bowling, youth kegler Raphael Zapanta made it two in a row after winning the February edition of the Fiji Water Prince/Princess of the Lanes Tenpin Bowling Tournament at the Saipan Bowling Center. Zapanta also prevailed in the January roll-off.

Ador Dimaano and Diane Camacho took the Budweiser King and Queen plums for this month.

In golf, Bennet Seman topped the 2009 CNMI Women's Golf Association February Tournament at the Coral Ocean Point, while Jhun Ortiz prevailed in the 2009 Fil-Taga Golfers Association February Ace of the Month Tournament at the Marianas Country Club.

Other leagues in the CNMI went ahead as scheduled.

Aqua Resort Club and Hyatt claimed their second win in the 2009 Tinian Dynasty Hotel & Casino Invitational Basketball League after beating Saipan World Resort, 91-89, and Asia Pacific Hotel, Inc, 93-90, at the Tinian Municipal Gymnasium.

In the 2008-2009 BANMI/Budweiser Basketball League Monday night at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium, the CNMI Junior Nationals went 2-for-2 in a week winning over IT& E, 104-85, and against Docomo Pacific in double overtime, 92-91.

Still in basketball, Kagman High School and Marianas High School made it into the finals of both the girls and boys division of the 2008-2009 MISO Basketball League.

In softball, Finance recorded the biggest win of the week, stunning the league-leader Northern Marianas College, 18-10, in the women's division of the 2008 Inter-Government/Business Slow-pitch Softball League night at the Capital Hill Ballfield.

To cap a busy week for CNMI sports community, Northern Marianas Amateur Sports Association held the 2008 NMASA Annual Sports Banquet Thursday night at the Seaside Hall of Saipan Grand Hotel.

NMASA named swimmer Rezne Wong and sprinter Yvonne Bennett Athletes of the Year, while voted Student Athletes of the Year were Marianas High School's Jericho Cruz and Jacque Wonenberg.

Athletics and basketball's Elias Rangamar was selected Coach of the Year, while golfer Jess Wabol was inducted to the CNMI Sports Hall of Fame.

NMASA also recognized athletes and student athletes of the month in 2008. The list included Ji Hoon Heo, Eli Torgeson, Tyce Mister, Jack Kabiriel, Nicky San Nicolas, Sarah Johnson, Marystar Welch, Grace Kimball, Mieko Carey, Maimi Shimizu, Maimi Oshima-Berger, Becca Newman, Rafael Jones, Kai Staal, Christian Miller, Trevor Ogumoro, Kensuke Kimura, Caleb Arriola, Raphael Zapanta, Abigail Martinsen, Lia Rangamar, Angel Marie Tan, Thea Minor, and Roxanne Duenas.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
The top awardees in the 2008 NMASA Annual Sports Banquet pose for a group photo after the event held Thursday night at the Seaside Hall of Saipan Grand Hotel.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Participants in the Saipan Swim Club 4th Annual Meek & Mighty Ocean Swim pose for group photo before the races at Pacific Islands Club.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Participants of the Fiesta on the Beach Two-Person Beach Volleyball Tournament gather for photo session at the Fiesta Resort and Spa.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Jeff Race goes for a backhand return during his finals match against Kirk Schuler in the men's open singles division of the 2009 Coconut Classic Tennis Tournament at the American Memorial Park tennis court.

NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ, JR.
Participants in the opening of the 2009 season of the Saipan Little League Baseball wait for the conclusion of the ceremony at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Ballfield.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Kagman's Nikita Hofschneider, right, dribbles past a Mt. Carmel defender during their playoff game in the MISO caging last week at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
The CNMI Nationals' Jayvan Tarkong goes up for a shot after eluding the defense of IT&E's Sonny Ranola during their game in the Budweiser caging last week at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ, JR.
A Hustlers batter swings during their game against the Dragons in the Majors division of the 2009 Saipan little League Baseball at the Miguel "Tan Ge" Pangelinan Ballfield.

Griffey returns to Mariners after 9-year absence

Ken Griffey Jr.'s familiar blue cap was in its familiar, fun place - backward. The jokes, the huge gum bubbles and the boyish grin were back, too. **24**

Saipan Tribune
Sports

Week of sports extravaganza

Tennis, Little League baseball, swimming, beach volleyball, basketball ... and the list went on, as the CNMI sports community had it all last week. **27**

Japanese pro rules Saipan legs of Jazy Cup

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
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REPORTER

Professional cycling champion Ogasawara Takahiro of Japan lived up to expectations, as he easily dominated the Saipan stages of the 8th Annual Jazy Cup Tour De Marianas held over the weekend.

The 28-year-old Japanese, who had been to the world championships twice, won the individual time trial (Stage 1) Saturday after finishing the 7.5-km race from from Marianas County Club to Suicide Cliff in 16 minutes and 44 seconds.

Then yesterday, he topped the 67-km road race around Saipan after completing the event eight minutes off his closest pursuers and submitting a time of two hours, one minute and 59.01 seconds en route to ruling the expert division.

His accumulated time in the two-day event was 2:16:59, which was roughly 12 minutes faster than overall second placer Bobby Mandapat of Guam, who had a total of 2:28:45.

Mandapat was also second in the ITT with a time of 19:06 and third in the road race, checking in at 2:09:45.52.

NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
World championship veteran Ogasawara Takahiro, the eventual overall winner in the expert division, is ahead of Jazy Garcia down at Capital Hill during yesterday's road race stage in the Jazy Cup Tour De Marianas.

Rennan "Butch" Sublemente was third overall with his two-day total of 2:29:46 after coming in fifth in ITT (20:17) and fourth in road race (2:09:50.51).

"I am very happy. It was windy but it was okay," Takahiro said of his twin wins.

Takahiro, who won the 2008 XTERRA Japan, is on Saipan for his regular training because he could not do it back home due to the cold weather and "the ice on the roads."

He will be competing in the upcoming Saipan XTERRA in April, as well as in the Tagaman Triathlon.

Takahiro's best finish in the world championship was 55th. He did not finish last year in Italy due to a broken bike.

He vowed to come back next year for the Tour De Marianas and defend his title in the Guam-based event held for the second time on Saipan through the efforts of the Jazy Garcia Sports Foundation.

Jazy Garcia, whose father Jesus Garcia Jr. was a three-time Tour of the Philippines champion, also competed in the expert division and placed fourth overall and first in the master's division with a time of 2:29.50, sixth in the ITT (20:28), and second in the road race (2:09:45.07).

Kieran Daly was seventh in ITT (20:32)

See JAPANESE on Page 26

Scary win for Rock Steady in SML opener

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
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REPORTER

Rock Steady pulled off a scary 6-5 victory over archrival Ford Rangers in the opener of the 2009 Saipan Major League Friday at the rain-drenched Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Ballfield.

The defending champion played aggressively early on, then halted the Ford Rangers' rally midway to clinch its first win in a close game that gave fans a glimpse on what to expect this season.

"We worked hard. The Rangers also played well. We are a bunch of players who like to concentrate in the field during a close game like this," said Rock Steady team manager Melvin Tenorio.

See SCARY on Page 26

NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ, JR
Jojo Camacho, right, of MARPAC turns over a giant check worth $5,000 to Saipan Major League president Rose Igitol before the opening game of the 2009 Budweiser Major League Baseball competition Friday night at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Ballfield.

Ayuyus dethrone Rays in MISO caging

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Tom Pangelinan made a reverse layup in the dying seconds of the game, lifting Kagman High School to an exciting 75-73 overtime win over Saipan Southern High School in the playoffs of the boys varsity division of the 2008-2009 MISO Basketball League Friday night at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

The victory dethroned the Manta Rays and sent the Ayuyus to a title showdown with the MHS Dolphins this week.

Pangelinan completed the game-winning play that started with Trevor Ogumoro's inbound in the last 8.3 seconds of the overtime.

Making an inbound from midcourt

See AYUYUS on Page 26

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Kagman High School's Kyle Concepcion, left, attempts to block Southern's Nathan Flores during their playoff game in the MISO caging Friday night at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

DCCA stays unbeaten in 15 matches

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
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REPORTER

Who can stop the juggernaut of Department of Community and Cultural Affairs?

The defending champion booked the season's most lopsided win to stay unbeaten after 15 games in the 2008-2009 Inter-Government-Business Slow-pitch Softball League at the Capital Hill Ballfield Thursday night.

DCCA's flawless game over Customs ended in a 26-0 count after only five innings due to the 10-run mercy rule.

Mel Sakisat and Jonathan Tenorio traded positions for DCCA in pitching and at first base to lead the team in finishing off Customs, which suffered its 10th loss in 12 outings to stay in 18th place in the team standings.

Sakisat and Tenorio struck out 15 of the 18, who went at bat, including the first seven batters.

Sakisat is running third this season in strikeouts, tying two other players with 16 as of Feb. 9.

In offense, DCCA went 26-for-30 at bat, scoring 24 RBIs, five doubles, three triples, and three home runs.

Julian Camacho made two home runs, including a solo in the third inning and a grand slam in the fifth. He was perfect at the plate, going 5-for-5 and recorded five runs, to prove that he deserves to be included among the leaders in individual batting race this year. He is ninth with an average of .636, second in RBI with 35, and third in home run with eight.

Four DCCA players scored three

See DCCA on Page 26